

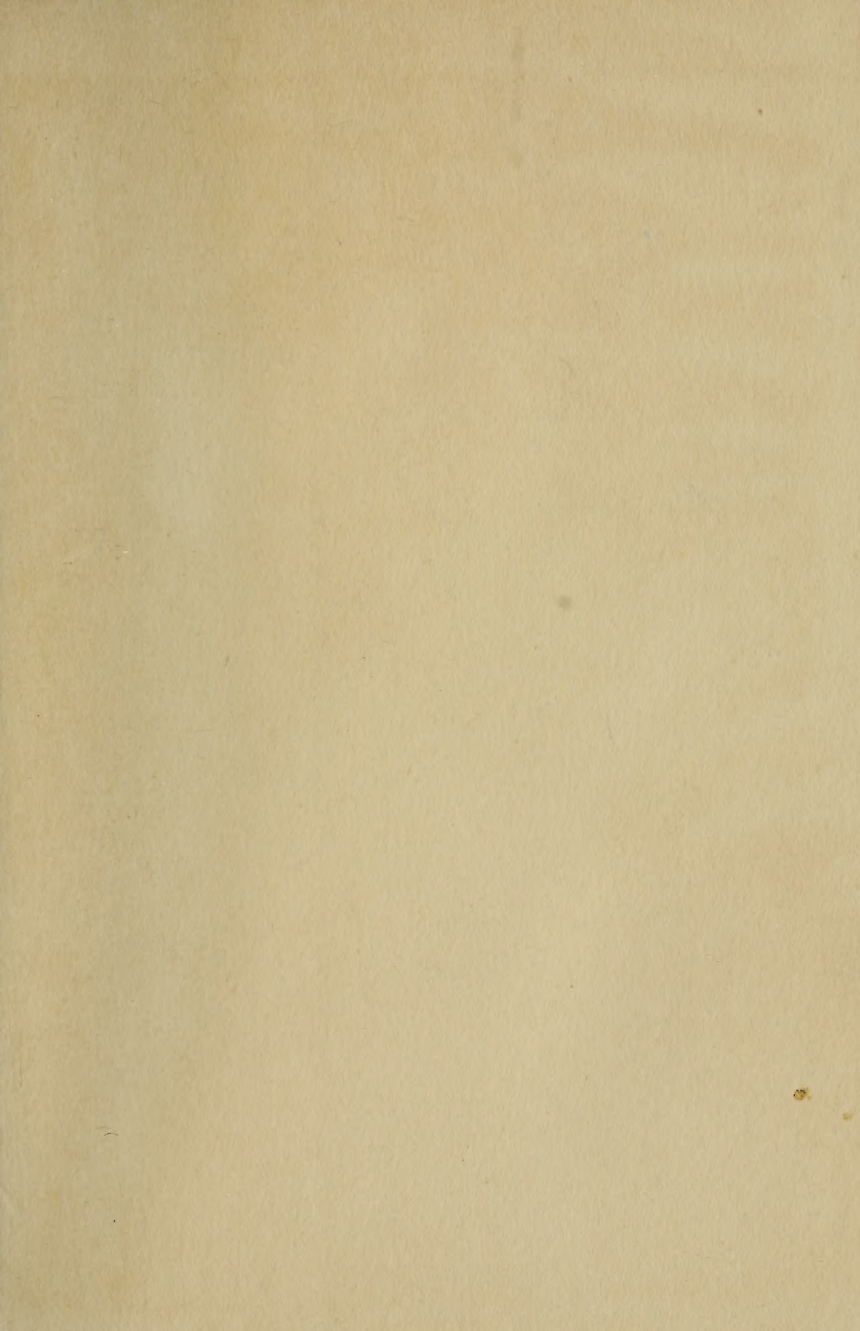
JIMMY JOHN AND JUNIOR HOME AGAIN

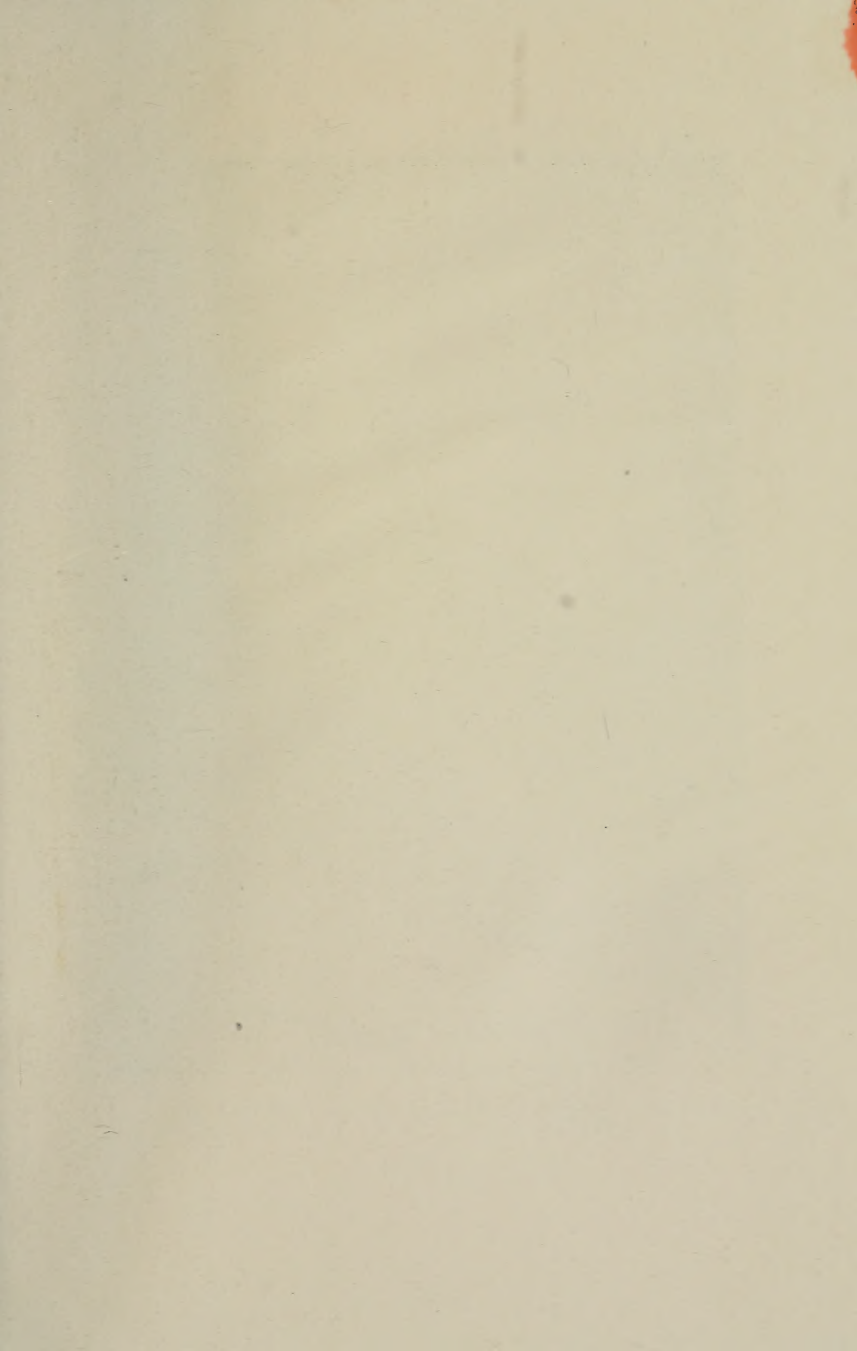
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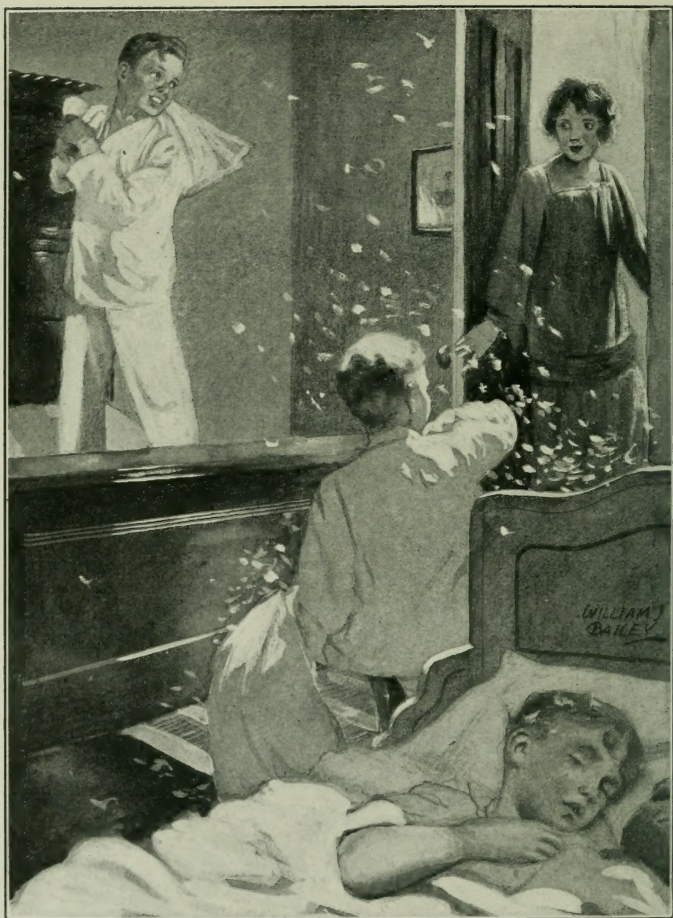
Jack Watson
year. of - 1931

George Breckenridge
1940

George Breckenridge II
1960







THE PILLOW FIGHT CAME TO A SUDDEN STOP

JIMMY, JOHN AND JUNIOR HOME AGAIN

By
JOSEPH CHASE

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"The Happy House Books"

Illustrated by
William Bailey

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Jimmy, John and Junior Home Again

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Jimmy, John and Junior Home Again

CHAPTER I

JUNIOR AMUSES HIMSELF

"You please give me one more flitter, Muvver, then I are goin' into the living-room and play on my o-cordigan. Dick, you please come and help me play it."

Junior Hopkins gave these orders with a beaming, syrupy smile. Junior was six years old, and how he did like hot corn fritters. He liked them almost as well as he liked hot waffles. He had eaten five fritters for breakfast, well covered with syrup. As a result, his round, rosy face was plastered with syrup, too.

It was a hot corn fritter breakfast at Blue Sea Cottage. Jimmy and John Hopkins, and their chum, Dick Carter, lingered at the table with Junior for "just one more." Jimmy was twelve years old. So was Dick. John was eleven. They were a "regular pair of steps," so John often said.

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"All right, Junie," nodded Dick. "I'll help you play on your o-cordigan." He grinned as he said "o-cordigan." It was Junior's way of pronouncing "accordion."

Mrs. Hopkins placed a sixth crisp, puffy fritter on Junior's plate. He swamped it with syrup and began eating it with zest.

The Hopkins family had been spending five happy weeks at Blue Sea Cottage. Mr. Hopkins was a traveling salesman. Each summer he had a six weeks' vacation. This summer he and his family were spending it at Crescent Beach, a lively seaside town.

Blue Sea Cottage was a pretty little house painted sky-blue. It had a long green yard with a sky-blue fence around it. It was only a short distance from the beach. Every morning that the weather was fine the Hopkins boys went out before breakfast for a swim in the surf with their father. Very often Mrs. Hopkins went with them. She usually stayed close to shore in order to look after Junior. Junior could not swim, but he thought he could. He was allowed only to splash along close to shore in his sky-blue bathing suit, and under his mother's watchful eye.

Now only one more week of the delightful

seashore vacation remained. Dick Carter, John's and Jimmy's best chum, from the town of Lakeview, their home, was making them a three weeks' visit. He had come to stay two weeks, but the Hopkins boys had each written his mother a very polite, coaxing letter asking if Dick might not stay on at the beach and come home with their family. Mr. Hopkins had brought his family to the seashore in an automobile. They were going home in the automobile instead of on a train. The boys thought this way of traveling great fun. Dick was very anxious to try it, too.

He had worried a good deal for fear his mother would not allow him that third week at the beach. When her answer to Jimmy's and John's letter arrived the boys went out on the porch and held a noisy jubilee. The answer was "yes," or there would have been no jubilee.

"You'd better go and wash your paddies, Junie," advised Dick, as Junior finished fritter number six and slid from his chair. "If you don't, you'll get the accordion all stuck up."

"Just look at Junie's face!" laughed John. "There's more syrup on it than there is in the syrup pitcher."

"There are not." Junior pouted his lips at

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John. He rubbed a sticky hand over a stickier face. "You are trying to fun me, Johnny, but I know too much for you. There are lots of syrup in the pitcher. My face don't have hardly any."

"You only think it doesn't," chuckled John.

Dick and Jimmy laughed. Junior laughed, too. He turned his blue eyes roguishly upon John. "You ought to wash your face, Johnny. It don't look clean at all," he said with a delighted giggle. He had spied a syrupy streak across John's chin.

"It's cleaner'n yours, anyway," John retorted.

"I don't care if it are. You please excuse me, Muvver." Junior gave his mother's arm a little tug as she sat at table reading her letters of the morning mail.

"Very well, Junie," she nodded, without looking up from the letter in her hand.

Junior scampered out of the dining-room. He took to the stairs singing in a high, tuneless voice, "Oh, I are goin' to play on my o-cordi-ga-a-n."

He had not owned the accordion very long. It had been given to him since he came to the beach by a friendly old sea captain who lived in an odd-looking house farther up the beach called

"The Snuggery." The sailor's name was Captain Andrew Turner and he and the Hopkins boys had become fast friends.

Junior was very proud of his new present. Next to a large green cotton umbrella and a high red silk hat which Dick had given him, and a crimson quilted smoking jacket which had belonged to his father, Junior prized the accordion as a plaything.

Dick knew how to "make the o-cordigan go." A hired man who had once worked for Dick's father had owned an accordion. He had taught Dick to play a little waltz tune and "Home Sweet Home" on the accordion when Dick was not much older than Junior. Dick was now trying to teach Junior to play "Home Sweet Home."

Every morning after breakfast since Dick had come to Blue Sea Cottage he and Junior would sit down on the davenport in the living-room for a music lesson. Junior had learned to play a few bars of "Home Sweet Home." What charmed him most was to be able to "make the mean old thing go." At first he had not been able to do much with it. Now he was delighted with the jerky, disjointed chords he managed to bring from the instrument. He would have liked

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to put on his red hat and jacket and go out on the beach with the accordion to give a free concert. His mother had strictly forbidden any such performance.

"Come on, Junie," beckoned Dick when Junior presently bounced into the living-room with a clean face and hands, "let's see if you can play what I showed you yesterday." Dick had already picked up the accordion and was drawing some really tuneful sounds from it.

Junior sat down on the davenport beside Dick and held out his hands for the accordion.

"'Mid pleash-urs a-and pal-a-ces though we ma-ay roam," Dick sang slowly.

The little boy dragged forth this much of the old song from the accordion. He played it in fairly good time with Dick's singing.

"Be-e it e-ever so hum-ble, there's no-o pl-ace like ——"

A shrill whistle from outside brought Dick's singing to a quick stop. The whistle was repeated four times.

"That's Cecil and Harry." Jimmy poked his head in the doorway. "Come along. Junie can play the accordion by himself for a while." Jimmy hurried on outdoors to meet their two playmates.

“No-o-w!” Junior sent up his usual grieved objection. “You please stay here, Dick.”

“I have to go for a few minutes, Junie. I’ll soon come back. You can play fine by yourself. You know you can.” Dick patted Junior’s shoulder then hurried from the room and after Jimmy.

Junior poked out his under lip and looked downcast for a minute. Then he took the accordion and trotted out to the front porch. He sat down on the top step and played all he knew of “Home Sweet Home.” He gazed longingly toward the beach. He was sure the people strolling along the sands or in bathing would like to hear him play. It was too bad “Muvver” wouldn’t let him take the “o-cordigan” out on the beach.

He sat energetically working his small arms in an effort to “make nice music” until the iceman’s familiar call sent him hustling with his accordion to the back porch. He and the big jolly iceman were great friends. Here was someone who would enjoy hearing him play.

Junior greeted the iceman with a burst of music as he came up the back steps with a huge cake of ice.

“Fine, fine!” praised the big man. “You’re

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some little musician, ain't you?" He chipped and hammered the cake of ice to fit into the ice-box to the uneven strains of "Home Sweet Home."

Junior stared after him as the iceman crossed the yard to music and went out the back gate. The little boy had never stopped to think about what lay beyond the back gate. It suddenly came to him that there were other places to go besides the beach. "Muvver" had said that he could not wear his hat and jacket on the beach, or take the "o-cordigan" there. She had not said anything about taking them out by the back gate.

CHAPTER II

A LUCKY TUMBLE

JUNIOR laid the accordion carefully down on the top step of the back porch and went into the house for the red hat and the jacket. His father had gone to Sea View in the roadster directly after breakfast. Mrs. Hopkins was in the kitchen with the maid, planning the luncheon. She looked up and smiled at the little boy as Junior paraded past her in his hat and jacket and on out the back door. He was allowed to wear this costume in the back yard.

This time he did not intend to stop long in the back yard. He hastily picked up the accordion, cast a quick, bright glance toward the open kitchen door and scurried for the gate. It opened on a grassy little alley. The alley led to East Avenue, one of the principal streets of Crescent Beach. This was the street down which Mr. Hopkins had driven the car on the day he and his family had arrived at the beach.

Junior had to lay down the accordion again in order to open the gate. By the time he had opened it and taken up the accordion the gate

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had swung shut again. He had considerable trouble with it before he and the accordion landed in the alley. He started jauntily forward up the alley, jerking a few notes from the accordion as he went. When he reached the avenue he stopped and began looking up and down the wide, pleasant street.

“Uh-h-h!” he gave a little, dismayed gasp. Only a short distance below where he was standing was the beach. This would not do for him at all. He looked up the street and grew hopeful. He saw plenty of pretty cottages with terraced green yards and wide, shady verandas. He thought he would like to stop in front of some of them and play as he had seen the hurdy-gurdy men in the city do. Perhaps the people would be so pleased to hear him play “Home Sweet Home” they would come out and give him pennies.

Turning his back prudently on the beach the little runaway boy marched sturdily up the avenue. He halted at the third cottage from the alley. Down went the accordion again on the stone sidewalk. The padded sleeves of his jacket kept interfering with his playing. Junior rolled them back, settled his high hat more firmly on his head and reached down for his “music box.”

He grasped it firmly, set his small slippered feet wide apart and began to play.

No one in the cottage except an old white-haired man appeared to have heard him. The old man came out of the house, stared severely at Junior over his glasses and went into the cottage again. It was the time of morning when most of the cottage folks were on the beach so the little, golden-haired, strolling musician did not attract much attention. Two small girls came running down the street in bathing suits. When they drew near to Junior they began to giggle, but they did not stop. Three young women in dainty white dresses laughed at the little boy as they passed him. "All dressed up, aren't you, kiddie?" one of them said to him.

Junior ducked his head and would not answer. He knew he was being teased. He played several loud, discordant bars after the young women to show his displeasure. He had better luck at the next cottage before which he stopped. Two young men in white suits with tennis racquets under arm came swinging down the steps and down the walk.

"Look who's here!" exclaimed one of the young men, smiling broadly. He made an amused motion toward Junior.

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"Yes, I see. What circus did you get lost from, Little Mr. High Hat? You've a fine combination there," laughed the other young man.

"It are not a com-com-comshun. It are a o-cordigan," Junior corrected. "I guess you don't know how to play on it like I do."

"No, I don't," the young man confessed. "I'm very fond of good music, though. Go ahead and give us a tune."

Junior had stopped playing when the young men spoke to him. He found it too hard to talk and work the accordion, too.

"I can play 'Home Sweet Home,'" he boasted.

"You can?" The young man who had first spoken to him raised his eyebrows.

"Yes, I can. My father makes his eyebrows go up like yours when he's only funning." Junior regarded the young man suspiciously. "If you are only funning, I don't play for you at all."

"Oh, now don't get mad. Let's hear you play 'Home Sweet Home.' It's one of my favorite songs." The young man tried to sober his face.

"I have to sit down to play it good." Junior plumped down on the lowest of three terrace steps. He began to play with great spirit. He

had seen the other young man's hand go to one of his trousers' pockets. The little boy played as much as he knew of the old song three times over, then struck into a burst of loud discord.

"That's 'Home Sweet Home' as far as it goes," declared the young man Junior had accused of "funning." He held out a bright new dime to the gratified musician. His companion offered Junior the mate to it.

"Thank you." Junior tried to bow as he had seen the hurdy-gurdy men bow. He let go one end of the accordion in order to collect the two dimes. It slid from his knees. He made a wild grab for it. His high hat overbalanced him. He rolled from the step on which he had been sitting and sprawled upon the accordion. Both landed between the young men's feet. The red hat slid along the sidewalk.

His audience picked him up, set him on his feet and clapped his high hat on his curly head. This time both young men laughed loud and long.

"No-w-w!" Junior backed away from them, finger to his mouth.

"Here you are, Little Mr. High Hat." One of the young men handed the little boy the accordion. The other gave him a third dime. Then

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they said good-bye to him and started on their way again, still laughing.

Junior sat down on the step again. This time he laid the accordion on the step before he sat down. He jingled the three dimes, first in one hand, then the other. He felt rich. He had expected not more than two pennies. He finally took his little pink-bordered handkerchief from the breast pocket of his blouse and tied the three dimes in a corner of it for safe keeping. Next he rolled the handkerchief into a ball and tucked it in the blouse pocket again.

“I are goin’ to hurry up now and play on you some more,” he told the accordion. “Pretty soon I are goin’ to have as much money as Johnny has in his bank.” He rolled the sleeves of the red jacket higher and unfastened the top button. The sun shone down warmly enough to make the padded jacket somewhat uncomfortable. Nothing could have induced him to take it off. It was next in importance to his red hat.

Greatly cheered by the little silver harvest he had reaped he plodded up the somewhat hilly street, working the accordion with fresh energy. He next met, first an old lady, then a young girl. Both smiled at him, but neither offered him even a penny. He passed a woman with a baby car-

riage. She was so greatly occupied in wheeling the carriage she paid no attention to him. He scuttled across the street in a hurry when he presently spied three boys the size of his brother, Jimmy, coming toward him. He was afraid they might tease him. They saw him, and laughed and shouted at him, but they did not follow him.

Plenty of automobiles whizzed by him in the road. They went so fast the people in them did not have time to hear Junior's music. The little boy finally stopped at a cross street and looked disappointedly about him. On the other side of the street an automobile was parked in front of a large bungalow. A man sat in the automobile, reading a newspaper. Junior brightened. He ran across the street and came to a stop on the walk opposite to the car. The man was interested in the paper. He did not look up. Junior looked about him for a convenient step on which to sit. There was none. He sat down on the stone walk and began "Home Sweet Home."

"Hello! Where did you come from?" The man looked up from the paper and laughed as he caught sight of the gayly-dressed musician.

"You listen to me," directed Junior. "I are playing 'Home Sweet Home.'"

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"Bless my heart! I believe you are." The man in the car had gray hair and a red, good-humored face.

"Yes, I are," nodded Junior, "only I don't play it all, the way Dick does. I can keep on playing, anyhow." He proudly crashed out a few choice discords for the gray-haired man's entertainment.

"Why, you're a pretty smart boy! That's what I call some music. You know how to bring the noise out of that accordion. That's a fine hat you have on, too. Where'd you get it?"

"This is my circus hat. Dick gave it to me. I came out to play music like the men with music boxes and monkeys. Only I don't have a monkey to dance and get pennies," Junior added regretfully.

"Well, you don't need a monkey. You're monkey enough yourself, I guess." The man threw back his head and laughed. He thrust a hand into a trousers' pocket and drew out a quantity of small change. He picked from it a little handful of pennies. "Here, kiddie," he leaned out of the car, "hold both your paddies."

Junior quickly shifted the accordion from his lap to the walk. He jumped up and skipped buoyantly to the car. He put both dimpled hands

together and held them up while the jolly man slid the pennies into them. There were as many pennies as he could hold.

"Oh, whee, hoorah!" he squealed delightedly. "Oh, I are glad! Thank you, nice Mr. Man!" He plumped down on the walk again to count the pennies.

While Junior was busy counting this new wealth another man came hurriedly down the walk from the bungalow and stepped into the car. He was in such a hurry he did not even glance at Junior. He took the wheel and started the car.

"Good-bye, kiddie!" the jolly man called as the automobile sped away.

"Good-bye, nice Mr. Man; good-bye," Junior shouted gratefully after the rapidly vanishing car. He stopped counting his pennies to call good-bye and lost his count. He counted them over several times. Each time he got a different result. He was not sure whether he had sixteen or eighteen or twenty-one pennies.

Out came the pink-bordered handkerchief again. He untied the dimes from one corner and added them to the pennies. He put the money on the walk in a little heap and spread out the handkerchief. Then he placed the money in the

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middle of the handkerchief and tied up all four corners. By hard work he managed to squeeze the handkerchief into his blouse pocket again. He had just done this when he heard voices.

Coming toward him was a group of children, all talking at the same time. One little girl was running ahead of the others and pointing at him. Next instant they had surrounded him and were exclaiming: "Oh, look what he's got!" "See the funny hat!" They set up a loud giggling.

Junior caught up the accordion and scrambled to his feet. He did not like being laughed at. "You don't know much," he said disdainfully. "You can't play on the o-cordigan like I can. I can play 'Home Sweet Home.'"

"You can?" one little girl cried out. "Go on, and play it."

"He can play tunes on that thing," the tallest boy in the group informed the others. None of the children were much older than Junior. They drew eagerly closer to the little boy when they heard this news and began a noisy demand for music.

Junior stopped frowning. He even smiled a little. "I don't play for you till I sit down on a step," he said decidedly. "I don't like to sit on the sidewalk."

“Come on, and sit on our steps,” invited one of the little girls. “That’s our bungalow right over there.” She caught Junior by an arm and pointed toward a stucco bungalow. It was almost across the street from where the children were standing.

The rest of the youngsters also set up a babel of invitation. Junior could not help being pleased at so much attention. His smile grew broader. He allowed the little girl to lead him toward the bungalow steps. The other children followed the pair, still giggling at Junior’s queer costume. The little boy marched along, bringing a few tantalizing sounds from the accordion as he walked. At last Junior had the kind of crowd he liked at his heels.

CHAPTER III

RUNAWAY JUNIE

MEANWHILE Dick Carter had hurried out of the cottage after John and Jimmy to meet Cecil Bates and Harry Clayton. Cecil and Harry were cousins. Harry was making Cecil a visit at the home of Cecil's uncle, Mr. Rossiter Bates. Cecil Bates was an orphan boy. His mother and father had both died when he was only a baby. He had lived with his Uncle Ross almost as long as he could remember. His uncle was a very rich man who liked to travel all over the world. So Cecil had traveled a good deal, too. He had spent most of his summers, however, at Crescent Beach in Bellevue Cottage, his uncle's beautiful bungalow. His uncle was fond of yachting, and in summer time liked to anchor his yacht, *Coral Queen*, at Crescent Beach.

John and Jimmy Hopkins had not known Cecil long. They had become acquainted with him during their first week at the beach. They had not liked him very well at that time because he "got mad at nothing, about every two min-

utes," according to John's opinion of Cecil. Besides that fault Cecil had displeased Jimmy and John by saying hateful things about Captain Andrew Turner, a fine old seaman, with whom the Hopkins boys were very chummy.

Cecil, however, had made up his mind to be chums with the Hopkins boys whether they liked him or not. Soon Jimmy and John became friendly with Cecil in spite of his faults. He was so bright and full of energy. He liked the same games and books they liked and he could always plan the most interesting things to do.

Still he "got mad" as easily as ever. He was a self-willed boy who was used to having his own way in almost everything. He even "got mad" at Mr. Hopkins, John's and Jimmy's father. One morning when Cecil and Harry were having a swim with Mr. Hopkins and his boys Cecil had started to take out a motor launch belonging to his uncle. Mr. Hopkins would not permit Cecil to take out the launch. He did not think Cecil was strong enough to handle the motor boat.

It was for this very reason Cecil did not like Captain Andrew. The old captain had advised his uncle not to allow the headstrong boy to take out the launch.

Not long after Cecil had become angry with

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Mr. Hopkins he gave a party at Bellevue Cottage in honor of his cousin Harry, who was soon going to his own home. Before the party was over Cecil had quarreled with Harry, Jimmy, John and Clarke Selden because they had refused to take a ride with him and the other boy guests in the *Sea Gull*, his uncle's motor launch.

The sea had been slightly rough and a brisk wind had been blowing when Cecil had started the launch away from its dock. Soon afterward the wind had increased to a "blow," as the sailors call a high wind or gale. The sea had grown very rough and the waves had risen high. Then the *Sea Gull's* engine had broken down and the launch had been at the mercy of the waves. On shore the four boys who had refused to go on the motor-boat ride had seen their playmates' danger and run for help. Jimmy had sped to the Snuggery, the odd little house in which Captain Andrew lived. The old sailor had lost not a moment's time in going to the rescue of the boys in his own motor launch.

Cecil had stepped ashore from the captain's boat quite a different boy from the wilful, stubborn lad who had run the *Sea Gull* out into peril. He had apologized to the captain, to Mr. Hopkins and also to the four boys with whom he had

quarreled. He had declared very earnestly that he was not going to "get mad" any more.

He had kept his word. The day after the rescue Harry had decided not to go home just then. Dick Carter had arrived at Blue Sea Cottage on the evening of the storm. As Jimmy said to his chums: "Now that Dick's here, and Harry isn't going home, and everybody's friends with everybody, we can have some peachy old times together."

Every morning that the weather was pleasant found Clarke, Cecil and Harry at Blue Sea Cottage early enough to join the Hopkins boys and their father in a frolic in the surf.

This morning they had missed the bathing for the first time in two weeks. Dick and the brothers had wondered what was the matter. When, later, they had heard Cecil's familiar, piercing whistle all three knew something special was in the wind.

"Uncle Ross is home," called out Cecil in a high, excited voice the instant he caught sight of Jimmy, John and Dick. "He came home late last night. He wasn't very mad about the *Sea Gull*. He thinks Captain Andrew's about the best person in the whole world."

"Yes; he's going to do something fine for

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him," put in Harry. "We wanted to come down to the beach this morning, but we wanted to see Uncle Ross more. That's why we didn't come."

"We said that if you didn't come to see us this morning we'd go to your cottage this afternoon," Jimmy declared loyally. "We thought something kind of particular had happened to you."

"I'm glad your uncle wasn't too mad about the *Sea Gull*. Captain Andrew says it can be all fixed up again. What's your uncle going to do for the captain?" John could not resist being a little curious about what Harry had just said.

"That's what we came on purpose to tell you about; that and something else!" cried Cecil. "My uncle's going to buy Captain Andrew the best gold watch and chain he can find. It's not going to be a present from him to Captain Andrew, though. It's going to be a present from us. Each one of the fellows who was at the party has to give me a dollar. I'm going to give the rest of the money for the watch myself. My uncle's going to take it from the money my father left me." Cecil paused to take breath.

"If we each give a dollar then we can say the watch is from us, even if Cecie does give the most," explained Harry. "I'd give a lot more

money than one dollar, but Cecie doesn't want me to."

"No, Uncle Ross says a dollar apiece is enough from the fellows." Cecil wagged his dark head decidedly. "He says I ought to give the most money because I made the captain all the trouble."

"We could give more than a dollar apiece," John said confidently, "but we won't if your uncle thinks we oughtn't to."

"Can't I give a dollar?" pleaded Dick. "I want to be in it, too."

"Um-m." Cecil looked reflectively at Dick. "I guess you'll have to be, even if you didn't go to my other party. You'll have to go to this one when we give the captain the watch and chain. It won't be any fun for you unless you help buy the present."

"That's just the way I think," Dick hastened to reply. "I can give my dollar now." He proudly produced from the pocket of his knickers a small purse in which were several crisp one-dollar notes. He handed one of these to Cecil.

"We don't carry our pocket money around with us like Dick does," teased Jimmy. "Ahem-m!"

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"Well, I like to 'cause I'm company." Dick showed his dimples in a cheerful grin. "I never have much money when I'm home. I spend my pocket money in Lakeview about two minutes after my mother gives it to me. I'll pay your dollar now, Jimmy and John, if you want me to," he generously added.

"Nope; that wouldn't be our money," John objected. "We'll ask Daddy for ours at lunch to-day."

"When are we going to give the captain the watch?" Jimmy asked anxiously. "You see we're going home the last of next week."

"I didn't forget that," nodded Cecil. "Now this is what we're going to do. My uncle is going to get up a water fête for next Tuesday night."

"What's a water fête?" Dick wanted to know.

"It's a kind of a party on the water. You spell it 'f-e-t-e' but you say it 'fate.' Everybody around here that has a boat trims it up with flags and Chinese lanterns and colored lights. At night the boats look so pretty with all the different colors, sailing around on the water. The folks that own the boats are on them then. They sing and play on violins and guitars and mando-

lins. Quite late in the evening all the boats get in a line and sail along together. The prettiest one takes a prize." Cecil was elated over the coming water carnival.

"Uncle Ross is going to take us all around with him in his new car this afternoon right after lunch to tell the folks here at the beach about the fête." Harry burst forth with this glorious news. "That's the something else Cecie had to tell you."

"Be sure and be ready when we come in the car for you. My uncle says we'll have to hurry like sixty to go all around Crescent Beach and invite everybody to the fête in one afternoon. We have to let 'em know as soon as we can so as to give 'em time to fix up their boats." Cecil spoke with boyish importance.

"Uncle Ross is going to the city to-morrow early to buy the watch and chain. He won't be home again until day after to-morrow," added Harry.

"Whoop!" Dick threw his white cloth hat into the air and made a jubilant grab at it as it came down. "I see where we're going to have some dandy fun."

"You bet we are!" shouted Harry and Cecil together. They sent up a further joyous whooping to which Jimmy and John lent their lung

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power. The four boys pranced about on the sands and yelled their satisfaction like a band of young savages.

"We'll have to go." Cecil caught Harry by an arm and pulled him along for a few steps. "We promised Uncle Ross we'd come right back as soon as we saw you. We'll stop for you about half-past one. Clarke isn't going with us. Uncle Ross brought him a book. He's up at the cottage reading it as fast as he can."

"We have our lunch at one. We'll be all ready by half-past," John promised.

"You won't have to wait a single minute for us," Jimmy called after the cousins as they trotted away on the sands.

"Poor Junie; I guess he'll think I'm never coming back," Dick said as the three walked to the cottage. "We've been talking to Cecil and Harry quite a while."

"Don't worry about Junie," John said lightly. "He wouldn't stay there and wait two minutes for you to come back."

Sure enough, Dick saw no sign of the little golden-haired boy in the living-room. Junior and the accordion had disappeared. Dick went about the cottage, up-stairs and down, calling: "Junie, oh, Junie! Where are you, Junie?"

No familiar, high-pitched voice answered: "I are here."

"Prob'ly he went out for a walk on the beach with Mother," Jimmy finally guessed after Dick had come in from the round of the back yard. "She's not here, so that's where she must be."

"But your mother wouldn't let him take the accordion along," reminded Dick, "and that's gone."

"H'm; that's so." Jimmy looked concerned. "Maybe he put the accordion away. He might have been mad at you because you didn't come back. That's the way Junie acts, you know."

"Maybe he did hide the accordion somewhere," Dick agreed with an amused grin. "I think I'll write my letter to my mother now. I was going to do it this afternoon." He briskly got out his leather writing portfolio which he kept in the writing-table drawer beside those of John and Jimmy.

"If Dick's going to write letters, we might as well write some to the Lakeview fellows," Jimmy suggested. "Please hand me my portfolio, John."

"All right. I've never written Ephie a single word since we came to the beach. I'll write him a letter now. He'll be glad to have one from

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me." John handed Jimmy the portfolio with an energetic flourish and seated himself opposite Dick at the library table. Ephie was a little brown boy, whose mother, Celia, did the washing for the Hopkins family. Ephie often came with her to Happy House on wash days. John and Jimmy liked Ephie very well.

Jimmy decided to write to Ned Blake and George Stearns. John thought he would write to Charlie Newton, too, after he had finished his letter to Ephie. These boys were members of the Winners, the baseball team to which Dick, Jimmy and John belonged.

The three of them went to their letter writing with a will. They scribbled with boyish recklessness, hustled each completed letter into an envelope and tossed the addressed envelopes onto a little pile in the middle of the table. The writing-bee progressed so swimmingly they concluded to write to the rest of the Winners.

"We'll do the writing job up right and have it over with," Dick declared ambitiously, "then we won't have to write any more letters before we go back to Lakeview."

"We ought to write a letter to Mr. Burton. Let's do it," proposed John. "I know he'd like a letter from all three of us."

"Prob'ly he thinks we're not very polite 'cause we haven't," was Jimmy's opinion.

"Humph! I wouldn't blame him if he did think so," agreed Dick, "after he's had a club house built for us and everything. You go ahead and write the letter, John. We'll tell you some of the things to put in it. Then we can all sign our names to it."

"Wait till I get a sheet of our best paper and an envelope." John went over to a small writing desk. He and Jimmy had a box of extra fine paper in the desk which they kept for special letters.

"You'd better write it on this other paper first and then copy it," Dick wisely advised. "Ahem!" Dick chuckled and puffed out his chest. "Let me think what I've got to say to Mr. Burton."

Mr. Burton was a wealthy gentleman who lived in Lakeview. For many years he had thought that he did not like boys at all. Later, he had come to know, first, the Hopkins boys, then their chums. He had grown heartily interested in the Winners because he found them truthful, honorable and manly. He had eventually proved himself their very good friend. He was fond of giving them pleasant surprises. His

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latest surprise for the Winners was in the shape of a neat little club house. It stood in a meadow which belonged to Mr. Burton. A part of the cellar of the pretty bungalow had once been a cave in which the Winners had had some royal good times.

It took the three longer to form the letter to Mr. Burton than it had taken them to write all the other letters. "Tell Mr. Burton this," Dick would say. By the time John had written the sentence Dick would have decided, "I guess I won't say that. Scratch it out." Jimmy put John through the same amount of labor. Then they all fell to giggling wildly over the task. They had hard work to settle down again. John finally completed the letter.

"There; it's done!" he waved the sheet of paper triumphantly in the air before Dick's and Jimmy's faces. "Listen, and I'll read it to you. If you fellows think it's all right, I'll copy it as fast as I can."

"Yes; it's after eleven now. We want to get our letters mailed by the time Daddy comes. He's going to take us for a ride before lunch, you know," Jimmy reminded. "Go ahead, John."

"Dear Mr. Burton:" John read. "We ought to have written you before now but we have been so busy playing and having a good time at the seashore we didn't write. Dick is at our cottage visiting us. He has been here two weeks and is going to stay another week. Then we are all going back to Happy House in the car. Our cottage is called Blue Sea Cottage. It is all blue. It has a little bit of a front porch that is so funny we have to laugh at it. We will tell you all about the beach when we see you.

"We have three new chums. They are Clarke, Cecil and Harry. They are good fellows; the kind you would like. Mrs. Burton would like them, too. We hope you are very well and that Mrs. Burton is well. We want to see you both very much. We had a storm on the ocean the day Dick came to the beach. Some boys went out in a motor boat and were almost drowned. A real sea captain, named Captain Andrew Turner, rescued them. It was very exciting to see the storm, but we were so afraid the boys would never get back to shore. It is good fun to be at the beach, but we know we will have more good times when we go back to Lakeview. All the Winners but Nelson White will be there. Nelson is out West with his mother. He will come home last of us all.

"Dick says the club house was almost done when he came here. We think it must be all done now. We are crazy to see it. This is John who is

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writing this letter, but I am writing what Dick and Jimmy tell me to, and some things I think of myself. As soon as we are in Lakeview we will all come and see you. We send many good wishes to you and Mrs. Burton. Daddy and Mother would send theirs, too, if they knew we were writing you a letter. They don't know now. We are going to tell them when we have lunch. Junie is fine, and a pretty good boy. Dick is teaching him to play 'Home Sweet Home' on an accordion. Captain Andrew gave him the accordion. It is almost lunch time now so we will close.

"From your friends,

"DICK, JIMMY AND JOHN."

"That's a bully letter," praised Dick. "Now hustle and copy it, John."

"Go on out on our great big front porch and wait for me," ordered John, looking pleased at Dick's praise. "I can copy it faster if you don't stay here. You kids are likely to jiggle the table or make me make mistakes."

Jimmy and Dick obligingly started for the front porch. At the front door they met Mrs. Hopkins.

"Why, where's Junie?" Dick exclaimed. "We thought he was with you."

"Junie?" Mrs. Hopkins repeated question-

ingly. "He was playing in the back yard with his red hat and jacket when I left the cottage. He never goes away from there."

"He's not there now. We can't find him any place around the cottage," Jimmy told his mother. "We thought you took him with you."

"No, I did not," Mrs. Hopkins said quickly. "Are you sure he isn't up-stairs?"

"Sure as can be," nodded Dick. "We thought maybe he was hiding from us. We looked in every little corner for him."

"Then he has done something he never did before. I've always been afraid he would do it; especially since we came to the beach." Mrs. Hopkins' expression was half alarmed, half severe. "He's run away."

CHAPTER IV

THE MUSIC MAN AND THE MONKEY

“**RUN** away!” Dick’s and Jimmy’s voices rose together. “That’s funny,” Jimmy added. “We’d better start right out and hunt him, Dick. Which way shall we go first, Mother?” Jimmy turned to Mrs. Hopkins.

“I’ve just come from the beach. I didn’t see a sign of him there. Perhaps you’d better go down on the sands first, boys. He may not be far from the cottage. There are a good many children playing on the beach this morning. He may have joined a crowd of them. I may have missed seeing him because I wasn’t expecting to find him down there.” Mrs. Hopkins’ tone had now become worried. “Hurry, boys! Go at once. Where is John? I’ll send him out on the search in another direction.”

“John’s writing a letter to Mr. Burton,” replied Dick. “He ——”

“He’ll have to finish it after Junie has been found,” Mrs. Hopkins interrupted. “John, come here. I need you,” she called out.

"A'right; I'm coming." John appeared in the hall a minute later. He poked his head inquiringly out the doorway at the group on the porch.

"Junie's run away," burst forth Jimmy. "We have to go out and find him."

"He has?" John opened his eyes. "Where do you s'pose he's gone to?"

"Huh; ask us," returned Dick. "That's what we have to find out."

"You go up the avenue toward the garage, John," directed his mother. "Jimmy and Dick are going down to the beach. Junie may have taken it into his head to pay the man at the garage a call. He always talks to Junie whenever we go there. I'll take another look about the back yard. If I can't find him there, I'll go down to the beach again and search for him. He's too venturesome for such a little boy. I'm afraid he may get into the water. Please, boys, don't wait a minute."

Mrs. Hopkins hurried into the cottage. The three chums cleared the short flight of steps in one leap. They ran down the walk and out of the gate as fast as they could go.

When next they met on the steps of the cottage it was almost one o'clock, and lunch time. Junior was still missing.

Mrs. Hopkins had gone directly to the back yard. She had discovered there that the back gate was partly open. She was not sure that it had not been left unlatched by the iceman or the garden truck man. She still had an idea that Junior was on the beach. She and Dick and Jimmy made a thorough patrol of the sands for some distance up and down them. They saw no trace of Junior.

After the hunt on the beach had proved unsuccessful she began to believe that it might have been Junie who had left the gate open. She also recalled having seen him come through the kitchen in his red hat and jacket.

"Wherever Junie is, he has the accordion," Dick reminded the worried searchers. "He's gone, and we can't find it, either. I guess he went out to give a concert." Dick could not repress a faint giggle.

"You are right, Dick," Mrs. Hopkins said with emphasis. "He has wandered off, goodness knows where, in that ridiculous hat and jacket, and"—she paused—"with the accordion."

"Then he's not down on the beach, or we'd have seen him in a minute with those togs on," Jimmy declared.

"Of course he isn't." His mother made a de-

spairing gesture. "He went out the back gate. I'm sure of it."

"That's it," nodded Dick. "You see you always told him he mustn't go out the front gate or down on the beach. Prob'ly you didn't say anything about the back yard. You know Junie is pretty smart for six years old. He kind of gets away with things sometimes. That's slang; 'scuse me, Mrs. Hopkins, but you know what I mean."

"I do, indeed." Mrs. Hopkins smiled in spite of worry. "I am only too well acquainted with Junie's method. Lunch is ready, chicks. I had hoped Daddy would be back in time for it. You boys must have something to eat. Then I wish you'd start out the back gate and go through the streets above the cottage. I'd rather not report Junie as lost just yet to the constable. I'd prefer to wait until Daddy comes home before doing that."

Dick and Jimmy ate lunch with the usual hungry-boy zest. Mrs. Hopkins was too greatly concerned over Junior's disappearance to be hungry. The two boys decided to eat their dessert when they returned from their next hunt. "We'll eat it after Junie's been found," Dick said.

"I guess he won't get any dessert after he has

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been found," predicted Jimmy. "He'll be put right to bed with only bread and milk. That's the kind of dessert he'll have."

What he would have for dessert was at that minute not troubling Junior. Like the majority of wandering musicians he had traveled quite a way from home and was happily located where he was not likely to be found in a hurry. After he had proudly seated himself on the top step of the bungalow and played "Home Sweet Home" for the admiring children, the whole crowd had been treated to cup cakes, thick with maple icing, by the mother of the little girl who lived in the bungalow. As soon as the cakes had disappeared the procession had started on again.

The next house they had visited was the one in which Frederick, the tallest boy among them, lived. Frederick's mother and his two young lady sisters were out on the veranda. They must have enjoyed Junior's playing for they did nothing but laugh during the concert. Afterward, Frederick's mother had sent them around the house to the kitchen where the cook was making French crullers. The cook was tall and thin and looked cross, but wasn't. She had said: "You funny little monkey!" to Junior and had given each child three of the small crisp crullers.

To hear himself called "monkey" had given Junior a splendid idea. "I know how to act like a monkey," he had told his followers. "I are goin' to show you the way a monkey does. My brother, Johnny, knows how to be a monkey."

As well as he could remember Junior had performed as he had seen John do. John had often pretended to be a monkey when the Hopkins boys would play menagerie at Happy House. Junior had run about in crazy little circles, pretended to climb up the side of the house, and had chattered loudly.

The smallest boy in the group had tried to act like a monkey, too. He had done better at it than Junior. He had made such funny monkey faces that Junior had stopped playing monkey to laugh at him.

"You look like a monkey," he had told the little boy. "I don't. I have yellow hair and blue eyes, and I are fatter than four monkeys, all put together. You are only a little fatter than one monkey. Anyhow, I have to play on my o-cordigan. You can be the monkey and go around and get some pennies. I have lots of pennies. A man with a nice red face gave 'em to me."

This cheering news had stirred up great ex-

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citement among the children. The procession had taken a hasty leave of the back yard of Frederick's home and gone on, full swing, up to the next corner and down a side street to a tiny shop where pennies could be exchanged for candy.

There were nine youngsters in the group besides Junior. He had grandly handed each one a penny. He had bought a whole ten cents' worth of bright-colored jelly beans for refreshment along the way. He and his newly-appointed monkey had given a performance for the pleasure of the woman who kept the store. She had shown her great appreciation by treating the crowd to orangeade.

"You are 'most as nice as Netta," Junior had assured her. "I have lots more pennies. After while we will all come here and buy some more candy." With this magnificent promise of trade the procession had trooped happily out of the store to fresh triumphs.

Before long Junior could not be called the only runaway among them. Frederick was used to going where he pleased about the town so long as he kept away from the beach. The other children had been limited to their own neighborhood. Frederick had soon put himself at the head of

the procession. He had said he knew the best places to give a show. Junior and the monkey had walked right behind him. Bobby, the boy who was playing monkey, had on a blue and red skull cap. Frederick's mother had given him an old green velvet jacket with short sleeves and silver braid trimmings. The jacket had belonged to Frederick's sister, but it had proved very becoming to Bobby, the monkey. With such attractions as Junior and Bobby no wonder the gleeful little company soon left its own neighborhood far behind.

From ten luncheon tables that day a small boy or girl was missing. The traveling ten, however, were not feeling the need of their usual noon-time meal. They had been lavishly treated to sweets along the way.

It was well toward two o'clock in the afternoon when the procession wandered back to the candy store where they had first spent Junior's pennies. Frederick was carrying the pennies in a tin cup. He had begged the cup from the cook before leaving his own house. The children had decided to buy ice-cream cones with the money which Bobby, the monkey, had collected. Junior still had some pennies and two of his dimes. He intended to buy another ten cents' worth of jelly

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beans to take home to his mother. He thought that if he presented her with the candy and the dime he would still have left she would not punish him for running away. Every once in a while he would happen to remember that he had run away. He would look solemn for an instant, then forget about it as quickly as he could.

The youngsters were not far from the candy store when a young girl and an elderly woman swept down upon the band and marched two of its members toward home. The pair were whisked from the group, scolded and hustled off so suddenly the rest of the children stopped and stared in wonder after them.

While they stood there Frederick spied an automobile coming toward them very slowly. It looked as though the machine was slowing down to a stop.

"Come on," Frederick waved his arms, "let's have a show on the sidewalk right near that car. Maybe the man that's driving it will give us a lot more pennies like the other man gave Junior."

The children made a rush for the car, Junior in the lead. He was within a few feet of the automobile when he suddenly gasped "O-h-h!" and began backing away from it. At the wheel

was a most familiar figure. A most familiar voice exclaimed: "Well, sir, how do you happen to be so far away from home?"

Mr. Hopkins leaned over the wheel and fixed a steady eye on Junior. The glance and the tone were too much for the little boy. "I—are playin'—I are—a—music man—ow, wow!" Junior's voice rose to a dismayed howl.

"Did Mother tell you you could come away up here with that hat and jacket on?" Mr. Hopkins asked in the same crisp tone that had already upset Junior's peace of mind.

"No-o-o-o," half wailed the little boy.

"Then you ran away from the cottage, didn't you?"

"Ye-e-es," Junior wailed again.

"You disobeyed Mother, didn't you?" Mr. Hopkins continued relentlessly. He got out of the car and came toward Junior as he spoke.

Junior backed in among the group of listening children for protection. He stepped on the hem of the red jacket and sat down backward. His high hat fell off and hit the accordion, knocking it from his small hands. Bobby, the monkey, snatched up both treasures. He quickly set the hat on his own head and slipped his fingers into the straps of the accordion.

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"Uh-h-h!" he shouted. "Just listen to me make a tune!"

This was too much for Junior. His father had now reached him and was lifting him to his feet. Junior broke away from Mr. Hopkins and flew at Bobby like a small hurricane. Next instant the two tiny boys were on the ground and rolling over the walk, grabbing and squealing at each other.

"Here, here!" Mr. Hopkins reached the struggling pair, separated them and stood them on their feet. "You're behaving worse and worse," he told Junior.

Bobby had dropped the accordion when the scuffle began. Frederick picked it up, played a few notes on it, then passed it to another little boy in the group who begged: "Let me play it, just once, Freddie."

"Wee, wee, wee!" squealed Junior. "Bobby are not goin' to have my o-cordigan, the mean old monkey." Even with his father's hand on his shoulder he tried to dance up and down, he was so angry.

"I can lick you, you old cry-baby," Bobby fiercely challenged Junior. "I can play that orcordonon better'n you can."

"You can-n-n't!" shrieked Junior. "Give

me back my o-cordigan, right n-o-w! Let me go, Daddy. I want to play my o-cordigan better'n Bobby."

At this exciting minute a running group of three boys rounded the corner above where Junior had made his final stand as a street musician. They commenced to shout the instant they caught sight of the other group.

CHAPTER V

FOUND AT LAST

"FOUND at last!" Dick spun round in a circle, waving a cheerful arm. "We've had an awful time finding Junie, though!"

"And Daddy found him first, after all," Jimmy said. "Maybe we haven't done a lot of running around after you, Mr. Junie." He shook a finger at Junior who now stood quiet, looking very cross. His father's hand was still on his shoulder.

"A lady on the next street below this one told us where she thought he was," John cried excitedly. "She saw him and this bunch of kids go up the avenue and turn the corner. That's how we got track of him. We've been hunting him since before lunch."

"Yes; Mother thought you'd be home in time for lunch, but you weren't," Jimmy told his father. "Mother said Junie had run away with his hat and jacket on. Look who has his hat!" Jimmy began to laugh. One of the little girls had now tried on the red hat.

"Dick, Dic-c-k! you please get me my red hat," begged Junior in a grieved voice. "Everybody's awful mean to me, Dic-c-k."

"Oh, he can have it. I don't want such an ugly hat." The little girl who had the hat pulled it off her brown curls and held it out to Junior.

"I want it. It are my hat." Junior snatched it from her and jammed it firmly down on his golden head.

"You can't have the hat or the jacket, either." Mr. Hopkins lifted the red hat from Junior's head and deftly slipped the loose jacket from his small son's shoulders. "You know Mother said you couldn't wear them outside the yard, but you disobeyed her. Now I just happened to meet you in the street. It's never too late to be obedient. You'll have to begin to be obedient now. Put these in the back of the car, Johnny." He handed Junior's pet playthings to John. "Junior is going to sit on the front seat beside me going home. Not because he is a good boy. Oh, no. Only because a boy who likes to run away needs watching."

"He said he'd buy us all ice-cream cones," anxiously reminded one of the little girls. "He's got lots of pennies that folks gave him. Bobby's got some, too, but only seven or eight." Mr.

Hopkins was just setting Junior on the front seat of the car when he heard this plea.

Dick, Jimmy and John set up a pleased giggle. Mr. Hopkins had to pretend to look very solemn in order not to laugh, too.

"Let me have those pennies, sir." He briskly held out a hand for them to Junior.

The little boy had not cried a tear since his father had come on the scene and put a stop to his fun. He could bear the taking away from him of his hat and jacket. He knew he would have them back again. To have to part with his pocketful of pennies, without having a chance even to help spend them, started the little boy's tears to flowing.

He fished the pennies, one by one, from his blouse pocket with loud sobs. When he came to the two dimes, he balked. "I don't give those chil'run my ten-cent dimes," he tearfully objected. "I are goin' to buy Muvver some candy with one dime and give her the other."

"No, you are not. Mother doesn't want either your candy or your dime." Mr. Hopkins parted Junior from the two dimes in spite of his grieved sobs.

"Hold out your hands," he said pleasantly to the little girl who had spoken for the pennies.

"There you are. Go and buy your ice-cream cones. I hope none of you have done what my little boy did—run away." He glanced shrewdly at the round-eyed group of youngsters. Some of them hung their heads or twisted about uneasily. "Divide the pennies evenly, first thing you do. Then—if any of you have run away—you'd better not stop to buy an ice-cream cone. You'd better go straight home."

With this wise advice Mr. Hopkins motioned Dick, Jimmy and John into the car and took his place at the wheel. Junior sat with his face hidden in his hands. He was still crying dismally.

The children were dividing their attention between Mr. Hopkins and the little girl with the pennies. At least half of them were runaways, and they knew it. They wanted very much to hurry off to the candy shop, but they felt sorry for Junior.

"Good-bye, Junior!" they called out as the car started. Even Bobby called: "Good-bye; come and play with us some other time!"

"I'm glad Junie's found, but he made us miss a good time this afternoon," Jimmy said regretfully. They had started out on the trail of the little runaway boy the moment they finished eat-

ing lunch. Cecil had told them to be ready at half-past one when he and his uncle and Harry would come for them in Mr. Bates' car. They had had to leave word with Mrs. Hopkins that they could not go, and why.

"Run on ahead, Jimmy, and tell Mother we have found Junie," Mr. Hopkins directed as he brought the car to a stop in front of the garage.

"I will." Jimmy opened the door of the machine and sprang out.

"So will I." Dick followed him.

John made a third herald of the welcome news. Mr. Hopkins stopped him long enough to hand him the accordion to carry. He wrapped the jacket about the red hat and tucked the bundle under one arm. He then took Junior by a hand and led him down the short street to the cottage.

Mrs. Hopkins was standing at the gate when the three boys dashed up to it. She exclaimed with relief when she saw the accordion and heard the welcome shouts: "He's found! Junie's found! Daddy's bringing him!"

Dick and Jimmy began telling her together how it had all happened. John anxiously inquired what Cecil and Harry had said when they came for the three chums. They made so much

noise Mrs. Hopkins put both hands to her ears and cried: "One at a time; one at a time!"

While the four stood at the gate Mr. Hopkins arrived with Junior. He had stopped crying. When he saw his mother, he commenced again.

"Give me that hat and jacket." Mrs. Hopkins nodded toward the bundle under Mr. Hopkins' arm. "You cannot have them to play with again while we are at the beach," she spoke in her sternest tone and emphasized each word with a shake of her forefinger at the runaway. "You cannot have the accordion to play with, either."

"Oh, oh!" mourned Junior; "oh-h-h!" After a minute or two more he gurgled: "Well, I are goin' home soon. I are goin' to have my hat and my jacket and my o-cordigan at Happy House."

"I don't know whether you are, or not," his mother replied severely. "You'll have to be a very good boy for a long while before I let you have them again. How do I know that you won't run away from Happy House with them, if I let you have them? Mother can't trust you."

"You don't tell me not to go out the back gate, Muvver. That's how I went. You said not to go on the beach. I don't." Junior cast longing eyes at the forfeited hat and jacket. "I was goin' to buy you lots of nice candy. I was

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goin' to give you a ten-cent dime, Muvver. Favver took all my money away from me. I was a music man and got lots of pennies. Now I don't have one penny."

"You don't need one. You are going to be put to bed until to-morrow morning; with only bread and milk to eat. And, if ever you run away again, Alexander David Hopkins, you will have to stay all by yourself for three days with only bread and milk to eat. Remember that."

"I don't run away any more," Junior earnestly promised.

"You'll have to make me believe you," his mother said as she led him up the walk and into the cottage.

"Oh, Mother!" Jimmy called after her. "We're going up the avenue a little way to see if maybe we can't find Cecil's uncle's car. It's going around the town somewhere while the boys are giving folks the invitations to the fête."

Mrs. Hopkins nodded her consent and walked on. Mr. Hopkins followed her, carrying the accordion. Junior peered up at his mother, then at his father, out of a pair of gloomy blue eyes. They surely were "awful mad" at him. Neither of them was smiling the least tiny bit.

"I like bread and milk," he observed, by way

of cheering up his unsmiling parents. "I had cakes, four times, and candy and a banana and a piece of cocoanut pie and orangeade, and I pretty near had an ice-cream cone. I are not very hungry, but I like bread and milk."

CHAPTER VI

BUSY DAYS

THE three chums had the good luck to meet the car driven by Cecil's uncle before they had gone far. Mr. Bates had finished giving the invitations to the water fête to one-half of Crescent Beach and was just in the act of crossing the central avenue of the little seaside town to invite the residents of the other half.

Uncle Ross was driving a roadster. Jimmy, John and Dick piled into the back of it with Cecil. Harry was sitting in front beside the driver. Mr. Bates would drive along a street very slowly, while Cecil and Harry would hop out of the car at each cross walk and deliver the invitation to the people living in the corner houses with the request: "Please pass this invitation to everyone on your side in this block."

Every summer he spent at Crescent Beach Mr. Bates had been the one to give the water fête. The same families came to the beach each summer so they knew just what to do when they received word from Cecil's uncle of the date when the water fête would be held.

With Dick, John and Jimmy to help deliver invitations it did not take long to cover the remaining half of the town.

"You've hustled so hard I'll ride you to Sea View and treat," Mr. Bates declared when the last invitation had been given and accepted.

"Every place we went the people were glad there was going to be a water fête. They smiled like everything when we told 'em," Dick said to Cecil as the car went speeding toward Sea View.

"'Course they're glad. It's fun to trim up the boats and try for a prize. Uncle Ross always trims up the *Coral Queen* in great style, but it never wins a prize. He won't let it win. You see he couldn't, for he's the one that always gives the prize." Cecil laughed as he made this explanation.

"Does Captain Andrew's boat ever win a prize?" asked John. "I guess he's always in the parade, isn't he?"

"Yes; but he never trims his boat much. He doesn't take out his sailboat. He takes out his motor boat. He keeps at the end of the line and has only about three colored lanterns for decorations. He always says there ought to be a booby prize so he could win it. Uncle Ross won't have a booby prize just because he knows the captain

would win it. My uncle is awful glad I like Captain Andrew now. He thinks a lot of him," Cecil ended with satisfaction.

Uncle Ross let out the roadster to the speeding limit and gave the boys the pleasure of a fast ride to Sea View. He drove to the principal sweet shop in the town. It was a beautiful white and gold store decorated with brightly blooming flowers and plants. At the back of the shop small gilt tables were scattered about among tall green potted shrubs. There was a white marble fountain with goldfish flashing their orange-colored fins about in the water of the marble basin. The thread-like streams of sparkling water sang a musical little song of their own as they splashed down into the basin.

"This is something like fairyland." John gave a sigh of content. "It's something the way the courtyards in the castles were when the poor princes who had been robbed of their rightful kingdoms went traveling and came to an enchanted castle where the lovely princess was in prison."

"So it is," Mr. Bates heartily agreed. He was fond of boys and liked to encourage their quaint fancies. "I never thought of that before. You see it is a long time since I have read any fairy

tales. Now let us see what they will give us in this enchanted shop; castle, I mean."

Cecil picked up a white and gilt card. "Here's what the fat old cook of the enchanted castle says we may have." He quickly entered into the spirit of John's fancy. He read aloud: "Sea Foam Nectar, Pineapple Velvet Cream, Tropic Delight, Chocolate Snow, Frozen Banana Custard, Rainbow Pudding," and a number of other temptingly-named sweets which might have been choice enough to serve in even a fairy-tale castle.

"Prob'ly the enchanted princess has to work like a poor servant for the wicked king of the castle. Maybe she'll come to take our order," was Dick's hopeful surmise.

They all snickered when a fat boy of about seventeen with a moon face and black hair which he wore in a stiff pompadour came forward to wait on them.

"That's a funny-looking enchanted princess," chuckled Harry. He did not like fairy tales. He was fond of sports and adventure stories for boys.

"Oh, he's only an enchanted page," Cecil waved his hand airily. "He's a faithful servant of the princess. You see she was out riding one day and her wicked stepfather, the king, got an

old witch to enchant her and the page who went along to take care of her. Then the king led her to the castle and dressed her in rags and put her to work in the kitchen. The enchanted page ——”

“The fatty, you mean,” corrected Harry.

“You don’t know how to play make-believe at all,” Cecil declared disgustedly. Nevertheless he laughed as good-humoredly as the other boys. It was easier now for him to laugh than to be peeved.

“Glad of it,” was Harry’s cheerful reply. “I’d rather play ball.”

It was after five o’clock when Jimmy, John and Dick ran blithely up the steps of Blue Sea Cottage. They had a great deal to tell Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins who were sitting on the porch and busy with the evening papers. They had forgotten all about the dollar they were to give as their part toward the watch for Captain Andrew. When they began to talk about the water fête they remembered the surprise in store for the old sailor.

“We told Cecil we’d give our dollars this afternoon, but we didn’t see you at lunch, Daddy, and then Junie got lost and we pretty nearly missed going around in Cecil’s uncle’s car to give

out the invitations. Some afternoon!" John cast an upward glance at his mother to see if she had noticed his bit of slang.

"I'm always willing to part with my dollars in a good cause." Mr. Hopkins took out his wallet and handed each of his sons a one-dollar note. He offered Dick one but Dick proudly explained that he had already given Cecil his dollar.

"We are going to be busy about every minute, except when we're asleep, until we go home," Jimmy announced with a satisfied air. "May we go to Cecil's to-morrow and stay all day after we've been in bathing and had breakfast?" He glanced appealingly from father to mother.

"Cecil's going to show us how to make some dandy decorations of colored crêpe paper. An old Japanese man showed him how to make them once when he and his Uncle Ross were in Japan."

John was quick to help Jimmy's plea along. "His uncle's going to the city to-morrow to buy the watch and chain for Captain Andrew, so we'll be good company for Cecil and Harry while he's gone."

"I see you've fixed things to suit yourselves." Mr. Hopkins pretended to look severe. "Shall we let them go, Mother?" he turned smilingly to Mrs. Hopkins.

"Well, perhaps," she teased.

"That's just the same as yes," cried Jimmy. "Oh, we pretty nearly forgot to tell you! Mr. Bates is coming to see you this evening. He wants you and Mother to go with him to see Captain Andrew as soon as he comes back from the city."

"You're not very reliable messengers," laughed Mr. Hopkins. "You 'pretty nearly forgot' to tell me."

"Pretty nearly, but not quite," put in Dick lightly.

At dinner that evening everyone missed Junior. The little boy had tramped about enough during the day to be tired out. He had fallen asleep over a bowl of bread and milk which his mother had given him after she had undressed him for bed. Mrs. Hopkins had made a place for the red hat and jacket in one of the trunks. She had securely locked the trunk, and taken possession of the key. She had put the accordion on the top shelf of a closet. Junior could not have these three playthings again until after he was back at Happy House.

Cecil, Harry and Clarke came with Mr. Bates to Blue Sea Cottage that evening. The six boys at once put their heads together and began to

plan what they were going to do to get ready for the water fête. Mr. Bates had a plan, too, which he wished Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins to hear.

"It's this way," he told Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins. "Captain Andrew's boat has never taken a prize at one of our fêtes because he won't let it. He always wants someone else to have the prize. Now the people of Crescent Beach think a great deal of him and really want him to win. He won't let me help him trim up his boat, and I don't think he'd let you. But the boys—that's a little different. When I come back from the city we'll take the boys he took off the *Sea Gull* during the storm and pay him a call. We'll let the boys ask him. I believe he won't refuse to let them decorate his launch."

"But maybe we might not fix up the captain's boat so that it would look the best of all." John spoke doubtfully. The boys had stopped their own talk to listen to Cecil's uncle.

"Then it wouldn't take a prize. We're going to play fairly. That will rest with you boys. It will be your business to make the captain's boat look the finest of all." Mr. Bates glanced smilingly about the knot of interested youngsters. They had drawn their chairs into a half circle.

Their bright eyes were fastened earnestly upon him.

"H'mh! I know lots of fine ways to decorate," cheerfully boasted Cecil. "May we have any kind of stuff we want to decorate with, Nunkie?"

"Anything I have on hand or can buy without too much trouble," promised the yachtsman.

"All right. We can make the captain's boat win the prize," predicted Cecil confidently. "All of the kids who were 'most drowned will be crazy to do it. What us fellows have to do is to make him let us go ahead and fix up his launch. When he says 'yes'—just watch us!"

CHAPTER VII

THE WATER FÊTE

THE next Tuesday evening was the date set for the water fête. It was also the last night the Hopkins family would spend in Blue Sea Cottage. The morning afterward at ten o'clock they were to start for Lakeview in the roadster.

Captain Andrew Turner had not been able to refuse the boys the permission to decorate his motor launch. The boys had gone with Mr. Bates and Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins to see the sturdy old sailor and had playfully "rushed" him. At a signal from Jimmy who had planned the rush, the whole crowd of youngsters had surrounded him and hemmed him in. They had yelled their request joyously at him and made so much racket the captain could not at first understand what they wanted.

When finally he had understood he had laughingly shaken his rugged head. They had merely taken that as a signal to rush him harder. After the second wild attack, he gave in. They had then boisterously demanded to be taken on board the launch. "We have to see just what kind of

boat it is, so that we'll know how to make her the prettiest boat of all," Cecil had said energetically. "The day you took us off the *Sea Gull* and brought us to shore in your launch we were too wet and too badly scared to look at it much."

The boys thought it strange that the captain had never given the motor launch a name. He had named his large sailboat the *White Wing*. When they asked him why he had not named the launch, he smiled.

"Oh, I'll name it one of these fine days," he said in his easy-going fashion. "I want to find a name that suits me first. Whenever you fellows happen to think of an extra nice name you might tell it to me. I may like it well enough to hang it on my boat. I had the *White Wing* three years before I named her. I've been thinking lately of several names. One of them I grow to like better all the time." He would not tell his young friends what the name was, although they quizzed him about it.

Mr. Bates had already sent an electrician to the launch to wire it for lights. Cecil said he wanted "lots and lots and lots" of lights. He wanted strings of them, besides extra ones to go inside his crêpe paper decorations and thus show them off. The youngsters brought the

crêpe paper to the Snuggery and made the huge trumpet-shaped flowers, fantastic shades and odd figures which the old Japanese man had showed Cecil how to make. He now taught the art to his chums. They had merry times gathered in the captain's back yard working and crowding into his little kitchen afterward for the lunch it was his pleasure to provide for them.

So far as the launch itself went there was not a great deal else they could do. Its chief beauty of decoration would be the electric lights. Still, they took great pains with even the hanging of the Chinese lanterns, the arrangement of their crêpe paper decorations and the placing of plenty of flags, big and little. They were bent on winning the prize. Though they had had plenty of good times since they had come to Crescent Beach Jimmy and John thought they had had more fun decorating the launch than anything else they had done at the shore.

The one who was not having such a good time was Junior. He missed his red hat and jacket, but he missed the accordion more. He reminded his mother almost every time he happened to be near her that he could not learn to play "Home Sweet Home" on the "o-cordigan" unless he had the "o-cordigan." He sang the little he

knew of "Home Sweet Home" as loudly as he could and twenty times a day for his mother's and father's benefit. These pleading reminders did not bring back the accordion nor even the red hat and jacket. "I are glad I are goin' home pretty soon," he told his mother. "I can see Doodle and Bulvider and Jabez and Mr. My-ars and all the nice animals at Happy House. You can't lock them in a trunk."

The watch and chain were to be given to Captain Andrew on the evening of the water fête after the boats had had their parade. The sailor and his young crew were to leave the launch and go on board the *Coral Queen*. The yacht was not a large one, but it had a dainty salon, or assembly-room, which was large enough to hold the presentation party. The old seaman had been told by Mr. Bates that he wished him to come on board the yacht after the parade, but he knew nothing more than that.

What worried the boys most of all was the weather. Suppose it were to rain on the great day? Or, if it rained or stormed even the night before the fête, the sea would perhaps be too choppy for comfort on the evening of the fête. The day before was warm and sunny, however, and the day of the fête could hardly have been

more pleasant. The sky was a dome of brilliant blue. The sea took on its bluest appearance, too, as though trying to match itself with the sky.

It was truly a day of amusement at Crescent Beach. Almost all the residents of the friendly colony of summer folks met on the bathing beach in the morning for a frolic in the surf. In the afternoon Mr. Bates had invited them all to a lawn party on the lawn of Bellevue Cottage. There were tennis and squash and croquet for those who liked games, and dancing, on a raised platform, for those who liked to dance. A caterer served ices, cakes and fruit punch to the guests. Each year, on the day of the water fête, Cecil's uncle gave the lawn party. The guests always had such a good time they would wait until the last minute before rushing home to their dinners and to get ready for the evening's fun.

Dick, Jimmy and John had been so occupied with trimming the captain's boat they had not yet been on board the *Coral Queen*. They were among the half of the boys who were to be on the yacht during the carnival. Just before dark Mr. Bates stopped at the cottage for his new friends. Clarke Selden and two of the Sea View boys were with him. Clarke was to make the presentation

speech to Captain Andrew. He had composed it and then studied it until he knew it by heart. Cecil, Harry and the rest of the boys were to be on the captain's launch.

The *Coral Queen* had two good-sized boats. These were rowed to shore for the guests by two sailors of the yacht's crew. The yacht looked like a fairy ship to the chums. It had no decorations other than its many lights. These twinkled and flashed in the gathering darkness, making it appear very beautiful. And how the chums did enjoy going up the small stout ladder which was put over the yacht's side for them!

All over the stretch of sea brightly lighted boats were beginning to move about. Some swept along slowly. Others went darting through the water, looking like streaks of flame. On every side music began to rise. There was the tinkle of mandolins and tuneful voices singing and the longer, sweeter notes of the violins. On shore the Crescent Beach band was playing lively tunes. The boys were delighted with what they were hearing and seeing. They tried to look in all directions at once so as not to miss anything.

The cottages situated almost on the beach had their verandas trimmed with Chinese lanterns.

The porch lights were turned on, too. This illumination made the beach nearly as light as it was in the daytime. There were not many persons on the sands after eight o'clock. Most of the Crescent Beach folks either owned motor launches or else they had been invited to go to the fête in the launches of their near neighbors and friends.

As soon as it was dark enough the fireworks began to play a part in the affair. They were sent up steadily from one launch and another until the water became bright with trails of glowing sparks.

On the *Coral Queen* a little knot of boys was out on deck watching anxiously for the captain's launch. They were sure they would know the launch the instant it appeared in sight although they had not seen it lighted up beforehand. Dick was sure he would be able to pick it out at once by the arrangement of its lights. Jimmy thought he would know it by the way the huge paper flowers looked with the lamps inside them. John was ready to point it out by the way the big flag showed with its pole dotted with tiny red, white and blue lights.

Every time there came an unusually bright bursting of rockets the boys would try to pick up

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the captain's little pier. Usually it was lighted by four small lamps, but to-night it was in darkness.

"Captain Andrew just loves to tease us," was Jimmy's half rueful remark to his companions. "'Course he must know we are watching for the launch, and are crazy to see it. He's keeping it dark on purpose."

"Oh, well, he'll have to let us see it pretty soon," Dick declared. "All of a sudden it will come rushing out of that dark spot up there—zip, bing, whiz! Just like that!" Dick made a forward thrust with one arm.

Jimmy was partly correct in his idea that the captain was keeping back the launch on purpose. So he was, but not to tease his young friends. At first he had not wished his launch to compete for a prize. He wished one of the friendly residents of Crescent Beach always to win the honor. When he saw how earnestly the boys had set their hearts upon having him become the winner of the prize, and how hard and eagerly they worked to make their wish come true, he changed his mind.

In order that the gorgeously-decorated launch should be shown off in the best way he decided to hold it back until the last minute, then send it

skimming along over the water so that it would attract everyone's attention. He explained this move he intended to make to his little crew. They were so pleased they sent up wild yells of approval and cheered the captain over and over again. The boys on the *Coral Queen* heard the cheers and knew who was making such a commotion. They wondered very curiously what was happening on the launch.

It was nearly nine o'clock when from the blackness of the captain's pier a sudden tri-colored dazzle of light shot up. It showed Old Glory floating gently in the soft night breeze. Burst after burst of gorgeous-hued lights sprang from the dark until the motor launch stood out on the sea like a brilliant, many-colored butterfly all ready to take flight.

From the other boats, thickly dotting the water, the sounds of cheering went up. A good many of the Crescent Beach folks had heard about what the boys had been doing with Captain Andrew's launch. In past years he had been only too glad to see one of their number gain the water-fête prize. Now they were just as anxious to have him win. A bright watch had been kept up on many of the boats for the first appearance of his launch.

Under the old sailor's sure hands the rainbow launch drew steadily away from the pier and toward the other boats. As it came on some of the launches were drawn back by their steersmen to make way for it, leaving a wide path straight down the middle of the stretch of water.

Captain Andrew had a surprise ready to meet this unexpected courtesy. When the launch had reached the middle of the water path he suddenly sent up one of the marvelous Chinese set pieces of fireworks, of which he still had a few. He had used most of them to amuse Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins and their boys when they had spent the Fourth of July with him.

The piece the captain fired off was in the form of a flock of bright-winged birds. They soared up into the sky almost the way real birds might have done. This brought him volleys of fresh cheers. From the *Coral Queen* the youngsters there began calling across the water to their playmates. Soon from both boats a vigorous chorus of shouts was being wafted back and forth.

The band on shore played "Nancy Lee" and "Larboard Watch" and other old sea songs in honor of Captain Andrew. "Now what do you think of all that fuss over an old salt like me? I never did anything to deserve it."

"You only think you didn't," Cecil was quick to say. "Other people like you a good deal better than you like yourself."

"Now maybe they do," the captain replied with pretended meekness. Then he and Cecil both laughed. They had become the warmest of friends.

The judges' stand was at the end of the largest beach pier. From it the six men who were to decide on the prettiest boat could see every inch of the water on which the boats floated. At half-past nine they sent out the order for the boats to form in line. The *Coral Queen* always led the line so she steamed into first place. One by one the other boats lined up behind her until they formed a broken, radiant circle on the dark water. The parade past the judges' stand had to be quite slow. After the boats had passed the stand they stayed in line, making a new circle.

The boys on both the *Coral Queen* and the captain's launch found the next half hour one of tantalizing waiting. They were positive that Captain Andrew's launch had outshone all the others. It was even prettier than the *Coral Queen*. That was their opinion. But would the judges think so, too?

CHAPTER VIII

THE NAME OF THE CAPTAIN'S LAUNCH

THE signal that the judges had come to a decision was to be three rockets, fired from the judges' stand in quick succession. Presently, across the night sky, curved and hissed the three signal rockets. The moment they went up the people on the boats raised their voices in jubilant cries, cheers and yells. They kept up the racket until one of the judges roared "Order, order!" through a very large megaphone. The megaphone made his voice sound as loud as ten voices would have sounded, all shouting "Order" together.

While the procession of boats was near enough to the shore so that the persons on them could hear the call to order, it was at least ten minutes before quiet settled down upon the gay boatloads of merry-makers. Little by little the sounds of singing and playing ceased. Last of all people stopped talking and began to listen for the announcement of the prize.

"Order, order!" roared the same voice again.

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"Please let me have your attention! It gives me very great pleasure to announce that Captain Andrew Turner, one of our most esteemed townsmen, has been awarded the prize. While all of the boats of our Crescent Beach folks look fine enough to be prize winners, the captain's launch has been selected by the judges as the one to which the prize rightfully belongs. Will Captain Andrew please bring forward his boat and receive the prize? We are sorry we can't call the captain's boat by name. We understand that it has no name. We hope Captain Andrew will soon find a suitable name for it."

There was more shouting and laughter and clapping of hands from the circle of boats as the judge finished his announcement. The pier on which the judges had taken a stand was the longest pier at Crescent Beach. At the end of it the water was deep enough so that the captain could easily anchor his launch there.

The judge had hardly ceased speaking when Captain Andrew had a megaphone to his lips and was answering in his deep, echoing voice: "I thank you, mates; I thank you. But I'm not the one who's worked for the prize. It is my good little crew that deserves all the honors. You know them. They're as true blue a set of

sailor boys as ever sailed the seas. And how they have worked just to see a worthless old salt like me win a prize! For their sakes I am glad to accept the prize. I'm just going to tell you one thing more. I've named my boat. It's a name you all know and it suits me down to the ground. The name of my boat is the *Cecil*."

"Why-y—the—idea!" Cecil Bates gave such a surprised lurch he nearly tumbled the boy next to him over. The captain's anxious little crew were grouped closely together on the launch's tiny deck.

"Hey; steady there." Harry stood firm as the two youngsters bumped against him.

"Huh! I guess you'd pretty nearly fall over, too, if somebody gave you a splendiferous surprise like that!" Cecil exclaimed. "I feel so proud I don't know what to do."

"Everybody's glad the captain's launch is named the *Cecil*!" cried Arthur Heath, a Crescent Beach boy. "Just listen to what a lot of fuss the people on the boats are making!"

The boys on the launch patted Cecil on the back and shook hands with the amazed and delighted boy. They would have mobbed the captain in the same enthusiastic fashion except that he was at the wheel and carefully manœuvering

the *Cecil* so that it should anchor directly at the end of the pier.

The prize was a very fine, expensive pair of marine glasses which Mr. Rossiter Bates had bought abroad. The prize he usually offered each year was a hundred dollars in gold. This year he had selected the glasses. He knew how much better than money they would please the old sailor.

The judges stood in a half circle as the captain made fast and sprang upon the pier, leaving an open space within the curve for him. As his feet touched the floor of the pier a powerful white light was suddenly turned on above the old man's head. Now the people in the boats and the few still on shore could see Captain Andrew and the judges plainly.

The Crescent Beach band had marched down to the pier for the presentation of the prize. They saluted Captain Andrew with a burst of music. After the prize had been placed in the sailor's hands by the judge who had made the speech, the band played "Auld Lang Syne." The pleased spectators took up the sweet old tune and soon the water rang with melody.

As soon as the band stopped playing the crowds began to call out: "Speech, speech."

Captain Andrew had not moved from his position under the bright white light. He was waiting for the opportunity to thank the Crescent Beach folks for the honor they had done him. His broad, weather-beaten face was radiant with smiles.

"My 'dear friends," he shouted through a megaphone which one of the judges handed him, "I can't begin to tell you how happy you've made me. You've given me the highest prize of all—your good fellowship. The best I can say is: 'God bless you.' I hope I'll always be worthy of your good opinion."

With this earnest speech the old sailor waved both arms in a kind of fantastic, but grateful, salute and made a dive for his boat. He was not used to having so much fuss made over him.

The Crescent Beach folks cheered his speech louder than before. His own little crew cheered loudest of all.

"Please, Captain Andrew, head the *Cecil* for the *Coral Queen*," begged Harry. "You know we're all invited to wind up the evening on board the *Queen*," he reminded, trying to look very innocent.

"Yes, my hearty, I know. What I don't know is what's going on among you fellows. There's

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something in the wind, I'll be bound." The captain eyed first Cecil, then Harry, with pretended suspicion. They both laughed, but would not say a word.

With Captain Andrew's return to the *Cecil* the procession of boats broke formation. The *Coral Queen* had drawn off a little from the other boats and was waiting for the *Cecil* to come up beside her. The captain and his boy crew met with friendly hails and greetings from all sides as he sent the rainbow launch skimming over the water to the *Coral Queen*.

The boys on board the yacht were lined up at the deck rail impatiently watching the approach of the *Cecil*.

"Most of the Crescent Beach folks have had about all the fun they're going to to-night. But our fun keeps going right on," Dick said joyfully to John. "I guess it'll be pretty nearly twelve o'clock at night when we get back to the cottage."

"Prob'ly it will, and we have to get up early to-morrow morning, too. But I don't care. If we feel sleepy to-morrow we can take cat naps in the car. Only Junie'll make so much noise I guess we won't sleep more'n a minute at a time," John added with a giggle.

"What do we care, as long as we're having packs of fun now?" Dick returned recklessly. "Hey, there you fellows are at last!" He raised his voice in a glad yell as the *Cecil* drew up alongside the yacht.

It did not take the launch's captain and crew long to board the yacht. The youngsters gleefully shook hands all around as though they had been separated for months instead of a matter of two or three hours.

"Gee, you kids came whizzing up the ladder, didn't you?" Jimmy jubilantly caught Harry by an arm.

"Oh, we're regular jack tars!" Harry exclaimed proudly. "Isn't it fine that the captain's named his launch the *Cecil*? I was so glad I yelled till I got the throat ache."

"Of course it's fine," Jimmy nodded. "Did you hear our fellows yell?"

"Yep; but we made as much noise as you did; maybe more. Say," Harry lowered his voice, "the captain says we're up to something."

Jimmy laughed. "Well, he couldn't guess what it is if he tried all night. Clarke said his speech for Mr. Bates and the rest of us."

While the reunited chums had been busy talking Mr. Bates, Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins and one

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or two friends of Mr. Bates were equally busy welcoming the old sailor. They escorted Captain Andrew to the salon with much laughing ceremony. Mr. Bates next rounded up the flock of boys and marshalled them to the salon. When the entire party were gathered in the pretty room they nearly filled it.

Mr. Bates had escorted the captain to the head of the room. While he stood talking to the sailor the rest of the party divided themselves into two groups. The grown-ups drew off to the left of the salon and remained standing. The boys gathered in a close knot to the right.

"Captain Andrew," began Mr. Bates, "the boys here have something very special to say to you. They have chosen Clarke to say it for them."

He nodded his head slightly toward Clarke. Clarke came forward and saluted the captain, military fashion.

Captain Andrew returned the salute. He stood eyeing Clarke so soberly that Clarke grew embarrassed for a second or two and almost forgot the opening lines of his speech. He managed to start it, however, in a clear, earnest voice, and went on with it to a triumphant close.

When he came to the last lines, "We wish

you would accept this watch and chain with a whole lot of affection from the fellows. We'd like you to wear it every day, just because we gave it to you," Arthur Heath stepped up beside him with a black leather case. He gave the case to Clarke who in turn offered it to the amazed captain.

The old sailor said, "Well, mates, this beats all." He said these words over several times before he could recover enough from his surprise to thank the boys for their gift to him. He called them all to him. They pranced about him so merrily he forgot his weight of gratitude and behaved like a boy himself.

After the presentation of the watch and chain the company seated themselves on the salon's narrow, built-in lounges or in wicker chairs. Two of the yacht's crew then served them with ices and fancy cakes.

When they had finished eating the ices and cakes, one of the sailors brought in a large punch-bowl of pineapple lemonade. He set it on a small table at one side of the salon and placed the little glass cups around it. Then he turned to Mr. Bates and said: "All right, sir."

"Thank you, Simmons." Mr. Bates gave the sailor a smiling nod. He was sitting by Mr. and

Mrs. Hopkins. He stood up and cast another smiling glance toward Captain Andrew who was sitting in the midst of his boy friends.

"I am going to ask Mr. Hopkins to be toast-master," said Uncle Ross. "We have a good many toasts to drink to-night. Before we start, I am going to make a speech. I can make just as good a speech as Clarke can."

"'Bout a thousand times better," Clarke instantly declared.

"Oh, no; not a bit better. The only difference between my speech and Clarke's is that all of you except the captain knew what Clarke's speech was going to be about. Not one of you knows what my speech is going to be about." Mr. Bates made a tantalizing pause.

"Hurry up, then, Uncle Ross, and tell us." Cecil's gray eyes were fixed curiously on his uncle. "Your surprises are always dandy, but I never guessed one of 'em right yet."

"My speech is about the *Coral Queen*," announced Uncle Ross. "Now the *Coral Queen* is a fine little yacht, but she's not quite large enough for me. I intend to go on a voyage around the world, starting next June, and I'm having a larger yacht built."

"Oh, I want to go along!" Cecil cried out.

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"Can't I go, Nunkie? How long will it take to go round the world?"

"I'll answer your questions later. Don't interrupt my speech." Mr. Bates tried to look severe, but laughed instead. "Of course, I don't need two yachts. When my new yacht was started I thought I'd sell the *Coral Queen*. Then I found I didn't care to sell it. A certain person did me a great service; the greatest service one man can do another. He saved the life of someone I hold dearest of all. He not only saved that someone's life, but the lives of seven others as well. He went bravely out to sea in one of the hardest wind-storms that has ever visited this coast. He ——"

"Oh, oh, oh!" Cecil sprang to his feet. "Oh, Nunkie, but that's great! I know just what you are going to say next, and ——"

"Sh-h-h." Mr. Bates held up a hand. "Then let me say it. Captain Andrew ——" He addressed the sailor.

"Aye, aye, sir." The captain's deep voice sounded husky and embarrassed. He hoped Mr. Bates would say nothing more about his rescue of the drowning boys. He had not been as quick to understand the yachtsman's meaning as Cecil had. The great surprise was still to come to him.

"I heard you say once, Captain," continued Mr. Bates, "that you'd wish nothing better than to be captain of a snug little yacht like the *Coral Queen*. Well, she's yours. Here's your right and title to her." He drew a long white envelope from an inside coat pocket and held it out to Captain Andrew. "May you have many a good voyage in her. I'll ask you to do just one thing. Take us all for a cruise in her some day."

Captain Andrew had risen to his feet. He stood staring at Mr. Bates as though he could not believe what he had just heard. He tried to speak, but no words came. Finally he managed to stammer out: "It's too much. I don't want anything but you folks' friendship. I—I couldn't accept the *Coral Queen*. It wouldn't be right."

Before he could say another word he was hemmed in by a noisy throng. Each boy tried to tell the old sailor at the top of his voice that he must accept the *Coral Queen*. Cecil shouted and pulled at one of the captain's arms. Harry tugged at the other.

At first Captain Andrew stood firm in refusing to accept the gift of the yacht. Neither Mr. Bates nor Cecil would give up. First one would

try to coax him to accept the gift they had set their hearts upon giving him; then the other would plead with him.

The captain said "yes" at last because he saw that it would be a severe disappointment to Cecil and his uncle if he refused any longer to accept the *Coral Queen*. The old man had always greatly admired the beautiful yacht. He had often wished he might own one half as fine.

As soon as the captain had accepted the gift of the *Coral Queen* Mr. Hopkins proposed a toast to his health. Then the captain proposed a toast to Mr. Bates. After that toast had been down Cecil's uncle toasted Mrs. Hopkins. Cecil politely remembered to toast his uncle's other guests. Last of all Mr. Hopkins had a bright little toast ready for each boy. He had something pleasant to say of each one of them.

Junior was the only one present who was not toasted. He had had a glorious time that evening on the yacht until the water parade was over. He had then dropped to sleep out on deck with his curly head against his mother's shoulder. While the captain was being presented with a yacht Junior was stretched peacefully on one of the lounges in the salon too deep in sleep to hear the joyful racket going on about him.

The boys gathered around Captain Andrew and plied him with eager questions about when he would make a voyage in his new yacht and where he would go.

"I don't know when I'll weigh anchor or where I'll make port," the captain told them. "I'm not used to the idea yet that the *Coral Queen's* mine."

"Wouldn't you like to go to the South Seas again and dive for pearls?" Dick asked with enthusiasm.

"Maybe, maybe." The sailor spoke half musingly. "I'd like to see the Tropics again, and my friendly green islands. The bluest skies in the world are down there. But I'll never dive for pearls again. My diving days are over."

"I know some boys whose days at Crescent Beach are over." Mr. Hopkins had joined the group around the captain in time to hear the old sailor's words. "We're going to weigh anchor in a very few hours from now, only our good ship is on wheels."

This was the signal for the breaking up of the party. The captain's launch and the *Coral Queen's* two boats took the merry company to shore. They stopped for a moment on the sands to say good-night.

"We'll be at your cottage to see you start for Happy House in the morning," promised Cecil.

"Yes, be sure and come," Jimmy said heartily. "To-morrow ——"

"It's to-morrow now. It's after twelve o'clock," Dick corrected.

"Well, it's dark yet. It doesn't look like morning." Jimmy made a playful thrust at Dick. Dick dodged the thrust and nearly upset Junior. The little boy had not awakened until he reached the shore. Now he stood blinking, his small feet wide apart.

"You look out what you're doing, Dick," he grumbled sleepily. "I are goin' to be awful mad at you if you don't."

"Oh, ex-cuse me, Junie." Dick made Junior a funny low bow.

"Oh, I know something," cried Cecil. "We forgot to toast Junie. Here's three cheers for Junie, the funniest little boy in the world. Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The grown-ups as well as the boys enjoyed cheering Junior. His father swung him to his shoulder. Junior laughed and cheered himself loudly. Then the party broke up to stroll home in the moonlight in half a dozen different directions.

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"Which would you rather do, stay a while longer at Blue Sea Cottage or go home to Happy House?" John asked Dick and Jimmy on the way to the cottage. The chums were walking three abreast, arms over one another's shoulders.

"Both." Jimmy gave a little laugh. "We like to play with the fellows here, and we'd like to see the rest of the Winners and hear about what they've been doing this summer. We like to go bathing in the ocean, but we could have a dandy time at the springboard at Rainbow Lake. We hate to leave Captain Andrew and Mr. Bates, but we'll be glad to see Mr. Burton and Mr. Robert West and Alfred Harding."

"Yes, and the captain would take us out in the *Coral Queen*, but we have a dandy new club house waiting for us at Lakeview," finished John.

"It's six of one and half a dozen of the other," Dick said with a wise air. "We don't need to feel sorry to leave the beach for anything except that we hate to leave the fellows we've chummed with here. And we'll see them all next summer again, and maybe Cecil and Harry this fall. Cecil said he'd make his uncle bring him and Harry to Happy House. We're just one thing, whether we're home or at the beach—we're three lucky kids."

CHAPTER IX

HOME AGAIN

"OH, I know where we are! We're only about a mile from Lakeview Pike. I remember that house we just passed as well as anything." Jimmy leaned forward in the car and shouted his pleased discovery in his father's and Dick's ears. It was Dick's turn that afternoon to ride on the front seat of the roadster. The three chums had arranged their turns on the coveted front seat beside Mr. Hopkins before starting on the long ride home from Crescent Beach.

Mr. Hopkins had not tried to make the trip home in one day. He had intended to start from Crescent Beach promptly at ten o'clock in the morning. Captain Andrew, Mr. Bates and the boys of the yacht party had come down to the cottage to see the Hopkins family start for Lakeview. It was eleven o'clock instead when the last good-byes had been said and the Hopkins' car was speeding through the sunlit streets of Crescent Beach toward Edgerton Pike.

Late the same afternoon the travelers had stopped at Dexter, a large town about half-way

to Lakeview. There they had stayed over night at a hotel. In the evening Mr. Hopkins had taken his flock in the car to spend two or three hours at an amusement park on the little river which flowed through the busy, manufacturing town. The name of the park was Riverdell. The boys had had plenty of fun trying the various amusements. They had first taken a turn in the "Whirlwind House." The walls of the house went round and round while they stood perfectly still. It seemed to them as though they were going round and round instead of the flimsy walls.

They had swung in high, circular swings, taken a trip on the Grand Riverdell Scenic Canal, traveled twice around the Mountain Hump-backed Railway, which shook them up till they giggled wildly, and had delighted in a merry-go-round that had wooden lions, tigers, bears and other wild animals as steeds.

Junior had chosen a fierce-looking, open-mouthed tiger to ride on. He had been in high glee because he could make such "a awful, cross old tagger" mind him. He had also tried his skill at shooting with an air rifle at rows of gayly-painted wooden figures. Jimmy and Dick had helped him aim at a wooden soldier in a red and

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green uniform at the right-hand side of the top row. When he pulled the trigger of the little rifle he managed to swing it so that he almost hit the proprietor of the shooting gallery, who was standing at the left of it, instead of the wooden soldier.

The next morning the Happy House folks were on the road again by eight o'clock. It was now a little after three in the afternoon, and, as Jimmy had just exclaimed they were within a mile of Lakeview Pike.

"Pretty soon we'll come to Lakeview Pike. After that it won't be very long till we begin to see Rainbow Lake. Then we'll keep on seeing the lake for a while and first thing we know we'll see ——"

"The post-office and our house, and we'll be home," broke in Dick. "Hurray!"

"What's the use in hurray-ing till you see 'em?" laughed Jimmy.

"Oh, I'm just practicing." Dick turned around in the seat to grin widely at Jimmy and John. "I'm beginning to feel glad already, the way I do when I first see my father and mother after I haven't seen them for a while. I guess they'll be kind of glad to see me, too."

"Huh; of course they will. They'll be glad

as anything. I'll bet Netta will be glad to see us, and Dinny, too. Please run the car as fast as you can, Daddy. We want to be home soon as we can." John stood up energetically, poked his head forward and yelled his plea in his father's ear. A jolt of the roadster set him down in his mother's lap with a bounce.

"That's a surprise for me, though I might have expected it," teased Mrs. Hopkins. "You're growing into a large, heavy boy, John Edward Hopkins."

"I know it. 'Scuse me, Mother." John flopped over into his own place. "I'm nine pounds heavier'n when we came to the beach."

"You'll soon be as fat as fatty Howard Myers, if you don't watch out," snickered Jimmy.

"I couldn't get as fat as he is even if I was shut up in a cage and fed on nothing but cake and ice-cream and candy," retorted John. "You're more likely to grow to be a fatty than I am. You're lots fatter than I am now."

"Eight pounds more isn't lots. I'm only that much heavier than you," Jimmy argued sturdily.

"Oh, I are goin' to see Doodle! I are goin' to have my 'brelly to play with, and my red hat, and my nice red jacke-t-et-et-et! I are goin' to have my o-cordigan-n-n!"

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Junior burst in upon John's and Jimmy's argument with such a loud, happy warble he drowned both boys out.

"Nanky doodle, doodle do, I are goin' to see Doodle. Home sweet-eet home, home, home. 'Mid pleash-urs and palishes, Doo-dle are home," he sang.

"Yes, Doodle are home," mimicked John. "Don't you want to see Tip and Bolly and Sunny and Taffy, too? You haven't sung a word about them."

"I are goin' to see 'em, Johnny," Junior declared hopefully, "but I don't know any song about 'em like I do about Doodle."

The three chums had been keeping a bright lookout for a first sight of Rainbow Lake. The roadster was now traveling along Lakeview Pike at as high a rate of speed as the traffic laws would permit Mr. Hopkins to drive. Both he and Mrs. Hopkins were as anxious to reach home as were the boys.

John caught first glimpse of the lake. "A-h-h!" he cried triumphantly. "I told you I'd see the lake first. It looks so little after seeing the ocean every day, but it's as pretty as ever."

"I like it better than the sea!" was Dick's

loyal cry. "I've seen it ever since I was a baby, and gone swimming about two hundred times in it. It's kind of like a friend, you know."

"That's the way Captain Andrew thinks about the sea. He's friends with the sea because he's known it all his life. After we've lived in Lakeview a few years we'll be as good friends with Rainbow Lake as you are. I tell you I'm glad we came to Lakeview to live." Jimmy gave a deep sigh of satisfaction and settled down on one of the small extra seats of the car for almost the first time that afternoon. He had been sitting sideways on it or hanging over the back of Dick's seat when he was not sitting flat on the floor of the car.

It was not very long after the travelers came in sight of the lake before they began to pick up the familiar spots along the pike which lay very near their home town. Then Mr. Hopkins turned the roadster into North Center Street and the old white house with the high steps where Dick lived came into view.

"Oh, there's my house! There's my mother sitting on the veranda!" Dick put two fingers to his lips and gave a long, piercing whistle. It was an accomplishment he was very proud of. His mother heard the whistle and looked up from

a bit of sewing in her hands. She had come out on the veranda on purpose to watch for the Hopkins' returning car. She recognized the whistle instantly.

"Oh, Mumsie!" Dick was waving both arms in a wild greeting. The car had hardly come to a stop at the curb in front of the Carters' house when he was out of it and dashing up the long flight of steps to his mother.

When she presently emerged with ruffled hair and a laughing face from the affectionate wooing Dick gave her, she went out to the car to greet the Hopkins family. Dick's luggage, which consisted of two suitcases, had been sent with the Hopkins' baggage by express. There had not been room for more than a luncheon hamper in the car on account of the extra passenger.

"Dick's home, and we're soon going to be." John had taken possession of the front seat after Dick had vacated it. After a brief but pleasant chat with Mrs. Carter the Happy House folks continued on the last lap of their journey. Now the car had slid smoothly into Preston Avenue. Just ahead they could see a dear, familiar dark green house in the midst of a shaded, velvety lawn. The gates to the drive stood open.

Round a corner of the big house rushed a black and white Irish terrier. He began barking furiously even before the car turned in at the open gates. He ran so fast down the drive it looked as though his feet hardly touched the ground. On the front veranda two fat yellow Angora cats sat enjoying the late afternoon sunshine. An old lady and a rosy-cheeked young woman came out at the front door and down the steps, their faces bright with smiles. The old colored man who was busy mowing the lawn dropped the mower and came hurrying forward. Jimmy, John and Junior were home again.

CHAPTER X

A "GOOSE" ROOSTER

"ALL out for Happy House!" Mr. Hopkins sprang from the car and opened the door of the tonneau.

"I can get out by myself. I are a big boy now." Junior evaded his father's helping hand and skipped to the ground like a lively young grasshopper. "Hello, Netta! Hello, Mrs. Netta's mother!" Junior ran straight to Netta and held up both arms.

Tip decided to welcome Junior in the same minute Junior held up his arms to Netta. The frolicsome terrier sprang between Netta and Junior. He rose on his hind legs and launched his strong, wiry body upon the little boy. Before Netta could catch Junior's extended hands Tip had tumbled him backward on the grass and was joyfully walking on him.

"Ti-i-p-p! You sto-op-p!" squealed Junior, trying to roll out of Tip's way. He was not crying. Instead he was laughing. The others were laughing, too.

Netta reached down and picked Junior up in

her strong arms. She kissed him on both cheeks and on top of his curly head. Then she hugged him affectionately. Junior returned the hugging with all his heart. Tip pranced about the two, barking wildly.

"Well, Joonyer, an' ain't it meself that's glad to see yez? It is. Go on, Tip. Do yez be jumpin' on Johnny and Jimmy. It's no cake Joonyer has for yez yet, but yez may get some later, if it's behavin' yez are."

"Where's Dinny, Netta?" Jimmy had been shaking hands with Netta's mother and politely asking the old lady if she thought that living at Happy House during the summer had made her feel better. Now he looked about for Netta's nephew.

"Sure, and he's not far away. It's round the corner of the house yez can look to see him comin', an' with a soo-prise for Joonyer." Netta's eyes had begun to twinkle.

"H'm-m." John pricked up his ears. "What's Dinny up to, I wonder? It's something funny for Netta can hardly keep from laughing."

"It's too wise yez are, Johnny. Sure, and ——"

"Quaw, qu-a-w, qua-a-aw-k-k! Cuh, huh, cu-h, hu-u-h! Ha-r-r-up-p, har-r-u-up-p!" sud-

denly came in a loud, familiar squawk from around a corner.

"Oo-oo-ee, Doodle!" Junior clapped his hands and ran toward the sound of the squawks which were growing louder.

Just then Dinny appeared. His bright Irish face was full of laughter. In his arms, struggling and flapping, was Doodle.

"Oh-h, Doo-dle!" Junior ran toward Dinny, his arms out coaxingly. Tip ran after him. Doodle saw Tip first. He gave a kind of wild screech, broke from Dinny's hold and sailed straight into John's face.

"Hey, there, you Doodle! You're crazy." John made a laughing grab at Doodle. He clutched nothing but air. The frightened rooster had reached the ground and was legging it for the chicken-yard.

"Heh, heh, heh!" cackled Jabez. "I clar fer gracious that Tip am al'ays pokin' his nose whar he am not wanted. He done scar Doo-dyl so that ar bird don' know whar he am at."

"Doodle would have been all right if he hadn't seen Tip," Dinny declared. "I've been teaching him to let me hold him for over two weeks. He's been quite good till to-day. Hasn't he, Jabez?"

"Oh, ya-as, that am so," the old man agreed,

with a beaming nod. "It am so. Laudy, but little Mister Joonie looks good!" Jabez was delighted to see all "his folks" again, but Junior he had missed most of all. Jabez and Tip were Junior's most faithful admirers.

The little boy had started off after Doodle, calling: "Here I are, Doodle. Don't you be scared."

Doodle had reached the chicken park and was running distractedly around the wire fence which enclosed it. Dinny had swung the gate shut when he brought the rooster out of the park. Doodle's one aim was to gain the other side of the gate.

Junior hurried to the gate and opened it. The big rooster made one or two more dashes back and forth, then half ran, half flew through the gateway without even recognizing his little owner.

"You are a goose rooster, Doodle. You don't know as much as you used to know. You don't know me at all." Junior hastily followed Doodle through the gateway. He carefully closed the gate after him. "There, I don't forget to shut the gate. Doodle are not smart, but I are."

Doodle was showing no signs of being "smart." He was behaving as wildly as he had

the very first time Junior had walked into the chicken park, more than a year before when the three Js had first come to live in Happy House. He did not seem to remember his little owner.

Just then Dinny jerked open the gate and came bounding into the chicken-yard with a little blue pail of corn. The instant the rooster saw Dinny with the pail he forgot his fright and hustled forward.

"You please give me the pail, and you go away quick, Dinny. Doodle are my chicken. I are goin' to make him know me." Junior did not intend that Doodle should think more of Dinny than of him.

"All right, Junie," laughed Dinny. "I don't care anything about old silly Doodle. I only fed him because Netta told me to."

"Then you don't feed him any more, Dinny," the little boy said jealously. "You tell Johnny you are goin' to have Bulvider. Bulvider are all right for you." Junior was always trying to give Bollivar, John's snapping turtle, away.

"I don't want Bolly, either. Anyway John wouldn't give him to me," Dinny kept on laughing. "Here's the corn, Junie. Doodle'll remember you pretty soon, I guess. Good-bye. I'm going to see John and Jimmy." Dinny

turned the corn over to Junior, who almost snatched it from him. The Irish boy left the chicken-yard and sped across the lawn to the veranda. Mrs. Hopkins, Netta and her mother, Mrs. Ryan, had gone into the house. The three boys, Mr. Hopkins and old Jabez still stood on the lawn, talking.

"Come on, Dinny," motioned Jimmy. "We're going to see our gardens. Jabez says John's garden looks better than mine. I wonder how that happened?" He cast a mischievous glance toward Dinny.

Dinny colored hotly under his freckles. "I—I—Jabez took care of your garden and the big one. I had John's and Junie's," he answered half shyly. Junie's garden had only flowers and corn and beets. It was easy to take care of. I played John's garden was mine. So I kept working at it all the time."

"I'm going to see it this minute." John darted across the grass ahead of the others. As they caught up with him he cried: "My garden's splendiferous, Daddy. Dinny ought to have the garden prize this summer. My garden's a lot finer than Jimmy's."

"Dinny done beat me with Johnny's gardening," Jabez agreed cheerfully.

"I hadn't said a word about a garden prize this year." Mr. Hopkins looked innocent. "You fellows certainly can't expect one. But Dinny—that's a different matter."

"We didn't say we expected one," Jimmy and John cried out together. They made a rush for their father and caught him by the arms.

"No fair mobbing me." Mr. Hopkins shook them off. They came right back again.

"No fair saying we thought we ought to get a prize," retorted Jimmy. "Rush him, John."

Mr. Hopkins nimbly dodged the attack. He sped over the lawn and in and out among the trees and bushes, the laughing brothers in hot pursuit. Round and round the big yard he raced them, always managing cleverly to keep off capture. Dinny stood watching and laughing. He thought it very funny to see a grown man "play just like a kid."

CHAPTER XI

A SURPRISE FOR DINNY

"JUST the same Dinny can beat both of you gardening." Mr. Hopkins finally paused to rest at the edge of the boys' gardens. He stood on the dividing line between the two plots.

Jimmy's garden was flourishing, even if it was not quite up with John's. The rows of bushy tomato plants were bright with red, ripe tomatoes. The lima bean vines had clambered to the tops of their tall poles. They were thick with long, green pods. The corn was almost ready to pull. In and out among the tall corn plants trailed hardy pumpkin vines, gold-dotted with rapidly-swelling pumpkins. The straight rows of cabbage plants were well-headed. To Jimmy's delight a small patch of cantaloupes showed at least a dozen melons. The green hills of sprawling cucumber vines had cucumbers of various sizes.

John had neither melons, pumpkins nor cucumbers in his garden. He had instead trim, straight rows of corn, beans, tomatoes, salad, beets, cabbages and feathery green parsley.

Dinny had weeded and cultivated the plot of ground so diligently that it looked as spick and span as the picture gardens in the vegetable catalogues. Not the tiniest weed was to be seen in the loose brown earth.

"Your garden looks better than mine because it hasn't any sprawl to it," Jimmy informed John after he had taken a prolonged squint at both gardens. "The different kinds of vines in my garden run all over the ground and make the whole place look kind of wild. I don't care. They're nice old vines. Just think of the melons and pumpkins I'm going to gather! I'm going to leave one great big pumpkin on the vines till the very last thing this fall on purpose for our Thanksgiving pies."

"You'll miss some of those nice yellow punkies just before Hallowe'en," chuckled John. "Dick and I'll need 'em for Jack-o'-lanterns."

"Don't you ever think it," grinned Jimmy. "My 'punkies' will all be gathered before Hallowe'en, except the Thanksgiving one. You wouldn't be so mean as to take that one. Maybe, if you're good, I'll give you and Dick a couple of punkies for lanterns."

"If you keep your garden in as good trim during the rest of the summer, Johnny, as Dinny

has kept it up to the present time you'll be doing well." Mr. Hopkins brought a kindly hand down on Dinny's shoulder. "Good work," he heartily commended the pleased Irish lad. "You're a true farmer, Dinny."

"I'm going to be a farmer some day." Dinny gave a decided nod of the head. "I don't mean that I'm going to have a great big farm. I mean to have a house in the country something like Happy House with a nice little garden of my own. Then my father and Netta and Grandma can all come and live in it."

"You'd better buy a house in Lakeview then," Jimmy advised. "Netta could live at Happy House in the daytime and go home to your house every evening. We couldn't give Netta up, you know. She's pretty nearly as much in our family as she is yours. We'd have to divide Tip, too."

"Huh; Tip would stay where he felt like staying," declared John.

"I guess I'd better wait until I grow up and earn a whole lot of money," laughed Dinny, "before I start to talk about buying a house in the country."

Mr. Hopkins had been listening amusedly to the boys' earnest talk. Now he joined in it with: "Well, Dinny, I think I know what the garden

prize for you ought to be. In fact, I have it right up-stairs in my room."

"What is it? When did you buy it? What ——"

"Foolish questions, Johnny," laughed his father. "The law of Happy House is 'Everybody surprise everybody, all the time,' you know."

"Yes, I know. Don't you think you ought to go and get the prize right away?" John could not resist asking this coaxing question. "Dinny's prob'ly crazy to see it, and ——"

"O-h-h, I don't expect anything!" Dinny cried, his face rosy with confusion. "It's all right. I've liked to take care of the gardens."

"I was only funning when I said you wanted to see the prize," John explained hastily. "Daddy knows how you feel about it. He says you have to have a prize, so you must take it."

"I'll not keep any of you fellows waiting. I'm not a meany." Mr. Hopkins shook off John and Jimmy. He made a funny, energetic dash for the house in an imitation of the way he had seen his boys gallop when they were trying to hurry.

"Hah, hah, hah," cackled Jabez from among the corn rows of Jimmy's garden. Netta had asked the old man to gather enough corn for dinner that evening. "My sakes teh gracious,

youh daddy done act 'zactly like youh boys. He am a funny man."

"I don't want any prize," Dinny persisted. "I have to go and feed the chickens now." He half started across the lawn.

"Nope; you can't get away like that." Jimmy pounced upon him. "John, you help me hold him."

John obligingly closed in on Dinny. The three boys were engaged in a good-natured tussle when Mr. Hopkins returned.

"Where's the prize?" John was quick to see that his father had nothing in his hands.

"Don't worry. I have it." Mr. Hopkins beamed tantalizingly on the trio. He patted a pocket of his tweed coat.

Dinny was very red in the face. He was trying not to think about a prize. Still he could not help being pleased because he was surely to receive one.

Very slowly Mr. Hopkins' hand slid into the coat pocket. "I'm sorry I didn't have time to do up the prize in at least twenty papers." He rolled his eyes at his own boys. "That's a favorite trick of these two, Dinny." He offered Dinny a tiny lacquered Japanese box. It was not more than two inches square.

"Why, that's the little box you bought at the beach!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"I'll bet I know what's in the box!" John cried. "There is ——"

"Oh, my!" Dinny's voice rose in surprise. He had the cover of the box off and was staring at a bright golden spot in the bottom of the box. He touched it very lightly with one finger. It slid into a corner of the tiny box. "Why, that's a ten—no; it's a twenty-dollar gold piece!" he said, looking wonderingly at Mr. Hopkins. "I guess you must have made a mistake about giving it to me."

"Oh, hurray! Twenty dollars is a dandy garden prize!" cheered Jimmy. "Daddy never makes mistakes. You earned it, Dinny, or he wouldn't give it to you."

"Is that the prize you were going to give either of us, if we'd been here to take care of our gardens?" John wanted to know. "I thought, maybe, because Dinny said he was going to earn a lot of money and then buy a house in the country, you might have thought it would be nice for him to have the gold piece to start with."

"Right-o, Johnny. That's partly the way I thought about it. Of course the gold piece is Dinny's—to do with as he pleases. He has

worked like a beaver this summer in these gardens. I don't know Dinny quite as well as I know you fellows, so I don't know what he likes best to play with. I wish the gold piece to make you happy, Dinny, whether you spend it or save it." He turned smilingly to Dinny who still looked a little bewildered at his sudden good fortune.

"I'm going to keep it till I'm a man," Dinny burst out with a solemn wag of his brown head. "I—why, I wouldn't spend it for anything, unless we got real poor and had to have something to eat. I'm going to ask Netta to put it in the Lakeview bank for me and I'll call it my new house money. I thank you about a hundred times, Mr. Hopkins." Dinny's bright face and shining eyes said more of gratitude than did his lips.

"Let's all go and tell Netta about it now," proposed Jimmy. "I'm hungry as can be. I hope she has lots of good stuff baked for us. I want two fat sugared crullers and let's make lemonade."

"Um!" John smacked his lips. "I'd rather have a peach turnover; but crullers are good, too."

"You'd better make it one cruller apiece and

no lemonade," advised Mr. Hopkins. "It's less than an hour until dinner time. I'm going to take a look at the dahlias, then I must go into the house and lug luggage up-stairs."

"Don't you want us to help you?" all three boys asked in a breath.

"Nope. I'm a lusty lugger and able to lug my own luggage. Go and show Netta the garden prize and tell her who won it." Mr. Hopkins knew what the boys most wished to do. "Shoo, shoo, now; scamper." He flapped his arms at the youngsters. They ran toward the back of the house, laughing.

"Sure an' I'd know yez was home again by the noise!" Netta appeared in the back door as the trio bounced up the steps. "An' ain't it Dinny that can make as much noise as either of yez, John an' Jimmy? It is."

"It's because we are home again that we feel like making a whole lot of noise," John declared. "It's just fine to be here and see you, Netta, and go around in the gardens and have a romp on the lawn with Daddy."

"Dinny has something bully to show you, too," added Jimmy.

"See." Dinny poked the tiny lacquered box into Netta's hands. "It's mine. It's the garden

prize. I won it. Mr. Hopkins just gave it to me."

"An' it's a soo-prize yer after getting, Dinny, bigger than the soo-prize you made Joon-ye!" Netta looked at the gold piece in amazement.

"It's the biggest su'prise I ever had," Dinny said proudly. "This is what I'm going to do with my prize, Aunt Netta." He poured out his boyish plan to his rosy-cheeked aunt.

"Ain't that a foine Irish fairy story yer after tellin' me?" Netta gently pinched one of Dinny's flushed cheeks.

"But I'm going to make it come true," Dinny replied sturdily. "Will you go to the Lakeview bank with me to-morrow, sure, Aunt Netta?"

"That I will; an' it's a dollar I'll be givin' yez to go with yer twenty," Netta made hearty promise. "It's a house in the country I'll be buyin' myself when my ship comes in. Yet nothing's been heard of that ship since I was born," she added humorously.

"I guess it must have been caught in a gale and went to the bottom of the sea with all your gold and silver and jewels in it," was John's opinion.

"Sure that must be why I never did hear of it," Netta agreed with a chuckle.

"You should have seen the storm at sea we saw and were almost out in, Netta," Jimmy said excitedly. "I'd tell you all about it now only you couldn't listen to me very well when you're getting the dinner. We'll have a party in the living-room to-night. We'll tell you all about the beach then."

"I'll be there." Netta instantly accepted the invitation to the living-room party. "Tell me nothing now, or it's no dinner yez'll be having." She pointed to the moon-faced kitchen clock. The hands stood at a quarter to six o'clock.

"All right. Are there any crullers, or turnovers, or cakes?" John had sidled over to the box where Netta always kept the crullers. "We're awful hungry."

"It's wan cruller apiece yez can have, an' no more, or yez won't be wanting any dinner."

"Ho; one cruller won't stop my being hungry," Jimmy assured her.

John opened the box and fished out two crullers. He handed Dinny and Jimmy each a puffy brown ring. "These'll only keep us from starving," he said, helping himself to a third cruller. "Netta doesn't want us around bothering her. Let's go see Bolly."

"Did Bolly try to get away from his house

while we were gone to the beach?" John asked Dinny as the three gathered about a large rain barrel near the corner of the house in the back yard. The rain barrel was the home of Bollivar, John's pet turtle.

"Just once. He almost got away, too. One morning I heard Tip barking as loud as he could bark. He kept on barking, so I went to see what was the matter. I ran to the back yard and saw Tip jumping around in front of the rain barrel. I guess I hadn't put the cover on the barrel very well when I had fed Bolly that morning for it was on the ground and so was Bolly. Tip was barking at him. Tip jumped so close to the old crank of a turtle once that Bolly pretty nearly snapped one of his paws. I went for the shovel, the way you told me to do if he got out, and popped him into the barrel again. Gee, I was glad he didn't get away!" Dinny ended with a relieved sigh.

"I owe Tip a big bone with lots of meat on it for giving the alarm. You old rascal!" John leaned down over the edge of the barrel and gently poked Bollivar with a little stick he picked up beside the rain-barrel house. "I know you're glad as can be to see me, Bolly." Bollivar showed his joy at John's return by snapping vig-

orously at the stick, then diving to the bottom of the barrel. There he stayed.

The boys went on to the chicken-yard to say how-de-do to their feathered friends. Junior had given up trying to pet Doodle and gone disgustingly to the house. Doodle had gobbled the corn to which he had been treated, then had ungratefully shied off from Junior. The instant he saw Dinny he came hustling forward from a corner of the park where he had been telling his troubles to a sympathetic group of hens.

"I don't know you any more, Doodle," laughed Dinny. "Shoo; beat it. I promised Junie I'd not feed you or notice you." This bad news did not prevent Doodle from stepping cautiously after Dinny as the boys circled the chicken-yard. By the time they reached the chicken-yard gate all the other chickens had joined the walk and were strutting in a procession behind them.

"All chickens think about is eating. I fed them just before you came home. They're greedy things, but they don't know any better," Dinny said as they swung the chicken-yard door shut and started for the back of the Hopkins' lot where the berry bushes and fruit trees grew.

"Well, some people are greedy, too, and want

to be eating all the time. Howard My ——” John checked himself. “Oh, I forgot. Dick and Jimmy and I promised Daddy we wouldn’t talk about Howard Myers any more than we could help. Daddy says it doesn’t pay to talk about a fellow, even if you don’t like him and he’s mean as anything.”

“We were going to tell you, though, before we went to the beach not to look at him or notice him if he tried to talk to you. We forgot to say anything for we were so busy getting ready to go,” Jimmy said. “You see ——”

“Who’s Howard Myers?” interrupted Dinny curiously. “I’ll bet he’s an awful mean boy. Any good kind of a kid could get along dandy with you fellows.”

“That’s what Dick said when he first knew us.” John looked gratified at Dinny’s frank opinion. “There’s where Howard Myers lives.” He indicated the Myers’ house with a half scornful nod.

“Oh, ho!” Dinny began to smile. “You mean the fatface. I should say I had seen him. I didn’t know who he was, though. He came clear down to the fence and started to yell at me one day when I first came to Happy House. Aunt Netta sent me out to pick some raspberries.

I thought he was too fresh so I didn't say a word back. After while he got sick of yelling, I guess, and went away."

"Did he ever yell at you again after that day?" was John's quick question.

"Yep; twice after that. He got mad the last time he tried to start something. He called me a wooden donkey and a deaf and dumb boob." Dinny giggled his enjoyment of the rude names Howard had called him. "I didn't see him again. Maybe he went away for a vacation like you fellows did."

"I s'pose he did. I'm glad you didn't talk to him. You found out for yourself the kind of fellow he is. We don't have to tell you a thing about him. His father's fine. John and I like him a lot, and Junie says he likes him a lot of much. He calls him 'nice Mr. My-yars.'"

"Mr. Myers owns the bank where you're going to put your gold piece," John informed Dinny.

The three boys had become so much interested in their talk they had reached the wire boundary fence between the Hopkins' and the Myers' property before they knew it. They were walking three abreast and they all bumped into the fence purposely, laughing.

“Hi, there! What do you think you’re doing?” demanded a loud angry voice. From among the tall grasses and weeds which edged the fence on the Myers’ lot a boy popped up like a Jack-in-the-box.

CHAPTER XII

AT THE BOUNDARY FENCE

“UH-H-H!” John let go of the wire fence to which his hands had lightly clung and almost sat down in the dirt backward. The boy had popped up only a few feet from him. He was a very fat boy and his fat face wore a very cross expression. In one hand he held almost half of a cocoanut pie. After a first glance at the three boys on the other side of the fence he carefully laid the pie down on the grass. Then he came closer to John, Jimmy and Dinny, a deep scowl between his brows.

“You’d better be careful what you do to my father’s fence,” he threatened. “I’ll have you arrested by the constabule if you even touch it again. You two big Hopkins babies don’t dare come over on our lot. Neither does that old wooden boob with you. You’re a bunch of cowards.”

When Jimmy had first heard Howard Myers’ voice he had made up his mind to do as Dinny had done and not say a word to the fat boy. To

be called a coward, and for no reason whatever, was a little more than he could stand.

"We're not afraid of you." Jimmy's brown eyes flashed, though he spoke quietly. "We haven't done any harm to your father's fence. Your father wouldn't say anything mean to us. He knows what kind of boys we are."

"No one can have us arrested when we haven't done anything." John looked his utter disgust at Howard's threat. He could not resist following Jimmy's lead. "Why, last summer when our baseball team wouldn't play your team because we didn't want to, you said you were going to have a constable make us play. But you didn't. You can't expect us to be afraid when you say such silly things."

"Here; who are you calling silly? You just say that again. I'll jump right over the fence and fight you." Howard doubled his fists, took a step forward and tried to look warlike. "I'll lick all of you." He made a face at Dinny who stood watching him with cold, steady eyes.

"I didn't call you silly. I said you said silly things," John corrected stiffly. "You couldn't fight us, for we wouldn't fight you. It takes two to make a fight."

"Huh. I guess you'd have to fight me if I

pitched on to you." Howard had no intention of "pitching on" to any one of the three youngsters lined up on the other side of the fence. He was secretly glad the wire fence was between him and them. He thought it sounded very brave to make threats.

"Then you guess wrong," John promptly flung back in his severest tone. "If you tried to pitch on to any of us now we'd just turn and walk away."

"You mean run away," taunted Howard.

"I said walk away, and that's what I meant," emphasized John. "I'd rather run away from you than stay and fight about nothing. My father says never to fight anybody unless you have to fight for your rights or to help somebody else get his rights."

"Oh, your father makes me tired!" Howard sneered. "He thinks he's so smart; but he isn't. He's ——"

Howard got no further. Dinny, "the deaf and dumb boob," suddenly found a voice. Mr. Hopkins was Dinny's idea of a perfect man.

"Don't you dare say another single word against Mr. Hopkins," he cried, his blue eyes beginning to snap. He leaned forward across the low wire fence with a jerk, and wagged his head

at Howard in angry defense of the man he adored.

Howard mistook Dinny's quick jerk forward as a sign of battle. All his bravery vanished. He dodged, took a clumsy backward step, lost his balance and sat violently down in the grass. He rolled awkwardly over, then scrambled to his feet, his face very red. He was in such a hurry to regain his feet that he did not notice where he stepped. Squash! He planted one of his broad canvas sports shoes squarely down on the coconut pie.

"Te, he, he!" A little musical snicker broke from Dinny's lips. Jimmy and John echoed it.

"Come on, let's go," urged John. "He's just what he said he wasn't—a silly; only he's a great big one."

"He's a big coward; that's what he is," Dinny declared contemptuously. "The minute he thought I was going to hit him he jumped back." Dinny began to giggle again. "It was funny the way he sat down, but it was funnier when he smashed the pie with his foot."

The three youngsters turned away from the fence, still giggling.

"Don't look back at him," advised Jimmy. "It's too bad he's such a meany. I wish he was

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different. His father would like to have him play with our gang of fellows. Last fall he was going to give Howard a fine party on his birthday, but I s'pose Howard acted so bad his father wouldn't have one for him."

"Mr. Myers told us he was going to give Howard the party and said he wanted us to come to it. We went over on his lot one day after Junie," John told Dinny. "Junie rolled under the fence and went to see Mr. Myers while he was walking around among his dahlias. We didn't know what to say when Mr. Myers invited us to the party. Daddy and Mother had both said we mustn't play with Howard at all."

"We didn't like to tell Mr. Myers that," broke in Jimmy. "We said we'd have to ask Daddy and Mother about it. Daddy was away, and Mother said it wouldn't be pleasant for us to go to a party at Howard's house when he didn't like us and we didn't like him, even to please Mr. Myers."

"Howard's birthday was the eighteenth of October, but his father didn't have the party for him, so we didn't have to tell Mr. Myers anything. It's fun to go to parties, but it wouldn't have been any fun to go to one at Howard Myers' house," was John's opinion.

"On Hallowe'en night Howard and two fellows he chums with sneaked over to the meadow and smashed in the roof of our cave. They made a wreck of it. They ——"

"Aunt Netta told me about that," Dinny interrupted Jimmy eagerly. "She didn't know how the cave looked, though, before it was smashed, because she'd never been to see it."

"We used to ask Netta to come and see the cave, but she wouldn't. She used to say we kept her so busy baking things to eat in the cave that she never had time to go and look at it," laughed John.

"I've been over in the meadow where the cave was to see the new club house the Winners are going to have. It's a daisy. I wish I was a Winner." Dinny looked suddenly wistful.

"You could be if you lived in Lakeview all the time," Jimmy said warmly. "I'm sure all the fellows of the Winners would like you. I'll bet you can play a dandy game of ball."

"I can play ball a little bit," Dinny replied, a pleased flush rising to his sunburned cheeks.

"Maybe we can have a game of ball before you go home," planned John. "After dinner we'll call up the fellows' houses and see how many of 'em are home. Nelson's out in Colorado yet,

but, if all the other Winners are home, you could take Nelson's place."

"We'd better see if we can get the A Boys to play against us. Prob'ly they can get up a team, even if some of the fellows of their regular team are still away on vacations. Oh, my; it's great to be home again!" Jimmy snatched his white out-going hat from his head and gave it a jubilant upward fling.

"Rah, 'course it is!" John caught Jimmy's hat as it came down. He set it on his head on top of his own hat.

"Hi, you Johnny; give me my hat." The brothers began a playful scuffle over the hat.

Dinny watched them, laughing. He thought John and Jimmy were the nicest boys he had ever known. Most of the boys he knew in the city were older than himself, and rough. Dinny could not help wishing that he were not going back to the big, hot city where he lived. He longed to live in Lakeview and be chums with the Hopkins boys. Dinny's mother had died when he was a little boy. He and his father, who was Netta's brother, lived in the city with his grandmother, Mrs. Ryan.

"There—see what you've done to my hat!" In the scuffle the round white cloth hat fell to

the ground. John promptly walked on it. He left part of a foot mark on the soft crown. Jimmy had picked up his hat and was vigorously dusting it with one hand.

A sharp, clear whistle suddenly cut the drowsy sunset air. It was repeated four times. The last time it was long drawn out.

"That's Daddy's whistle. Dinner's ready. That long whistle means everybody's at the table waiting for us. We'd better hustle." John broke into a run. Jimmy and Dinny kept pace with him as the three loiterers made a spirited dash for the house.

Over on the other side of the wire fence Howard Myers had sulkily watched the trio of boys until they were half-way across the Hopkins' lot. He was feeling decidedly cross because he had tumbled backward into the grass and "those Hopkins babies" and the "deaf and dumb boob," who wasn't deaf and dumb, had laughed at him. The loss of the cocoanut pie made him even more cross. He had had a hard time slipping out of the pantry with it and dodging the cook in the kitchen.

He bent down and spitefully pulled a handful of long grass. Next he balanced himself clumsily on one foot and wiped the cocoanut custard

from his shoe. Then he snatched up the wreck of the unlucky pie and flung it down in the dirt as hard as he could. He glowered at it for an instant. Suddenly remembering that his father might happen to walk in that part of the garden the fat boy hastily scooped up several handfuls of the loose garden earth and covered the mashed remains of the pie.

Howard had chosen the back of the Myers' lot as the best place to gobble the pie without being seen from the house. " Might as well beat it out of here," he muttered sullenly. " My pie's gone. Those three fresh kids are to blame, so they are. I'll get Fred and Wally to help me and we'll lick the wooden boob the first time we catch him outside Hopkins' gate. He's only a chore boy that works for Hopkins, so I guess nobody will care how hard we lick him."

CHAPTER XIII

HAPPINESS AT HAPPY HOUSE

JIMMY and John had so many pleasant things to tell Dinny about what they did at Crescent Beach and Dinny had so much to tell them of all he had seen and done at Happy House they forgot all about their disagreeable meeting with Howard Myers. After a dinner of creamed chicken and other of their favorite dishes which ended with the boys' old-time treat of black chocolate cake and peach ice-cream, the two congenial families went into the living-room for a pleasant evening together.

"Please don't let Dinny go home for a while, Netta," begged John; "or your mother, either," he hastily added, not forgetting to be polite. "We're going to call up the Winners right now on the 'phone and talk about getting up a game of ball. Dinny will have to take Nelson's place on our team 'cause Nelson's away yet. We want Dinny to be sure and stay till after we have one game, anyhow."

"I should think it would be a good deal too hot yet for your mother to go back to the city,

Netta." Jimmy showed his white teeth in an engaging grin. "She might get sick again if she went home before the hot weather's over."

"It's foine I am now, an' it's home I must be goin'. Sure, it's too koind yez all have been to me an' me childer all summer," protested the little white-haired Irish woman. "It's yer house yez need fer yerselves."

"Well, you can't go home unless Daddy says so. He's the King of Happy House. Please, your majesty, don't let these two subjects get away from your kingdom." John turned to his father and made such a deep respectful bow he nearly overbalanced.

"Your request is granted, Sir Wobbly John. Please don't stand on your head. The two subjects will be guarded day and night by fierce yellow cats, savage black and white dogs, snippy snapping turtles, and determined Hopkineses," declared the King of Happy House with a beaming smile at the two subjects.

"There; it's all settled. Let's telephone Dick first." John started for the hall, beckoning Dinny and Jimmy to come with him.

A buzz of grateful protest rose from Netta and her mother as the boys left the room.

"Maybe you'd better wait a minute," Dinny

said doubtfully as Jimmy reached for the telephone receiver. "My grandmother makes up her mind awful hard. If she says she's going home, then she is, and she'll take me along."

"Oh, Daddy can make up his mind harder than she can," was Jimmy's cheerful reply. "He'll make her stay. He'll talk so fast to her and say such funny things, she'll laugh, and then she'll stay. You just see if it won't turn out that way."

"Hello, hello! Is that you?" joyfully came Dick's voice over the wire in answer to Jimmy's call. Dick hailed Jimmy with as much enthusiasm as though it had been months instead of a few hours since last he had seen his chum.

"Yes, it is," Jimmy called back in the same delighted tone. "How are you, anyway?" he asked with a chuckle.

"Oh, I'm fine. My mother had a dandy dinner on purpose for me. I went over to the post-office after dinner to mail a letter for her and I saw Raymond, Merritt and George. Gee, we had a great old time shaking hands. All the Winners are home but Nelson. Raymond didn't like to stay with his grandmother in New York all summer so he came home." Dick poured out this news as fast as he could talk.

"I'm going to call the fellows up, one after another. I began with you. I thought you'd know about some of them already. Can you come to Happy House to-morrow, right after lunch? Come to lunch, if you think your mother will let you," Jimmy said hospitably.

"She won't," came back regretfully from Dick. "She said she hoped I stay home and visit her for a while since I stayed so long with you at the beach. What are you going to call the Winners up for?"

"To get up a game of ball while Dinny's at our house." Jimmy went on to tell Dick his plan. John stood on the other side of the telephone and interrupted Jimmy now and then by yelling a quick remark to Dick in the transmitter.

Dinny hovered in the background, his eyes sparkling, his sober face lighted by a half shy smile. He was not used to having a fuss made over him. He could not help wondering why it was that Jimmy and John should go to so much trouble for him.

By the time the two Js had held more or less lengthy conversations over the 'phone with the rest of their chums, in the living-room Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins had persuaded Dinny's grandmother to stay a little longer at Happy House.

When the boys finally wound up their 'phone talk and returned to the living-room John gave one glance about him and called out: "It's all fixed, Dinny. You're going to stay. I can tell that by the way Netta's smiling. She's so glad her mother's not going home yet. She's laughing all over her face!"

"An' how can I help it?" Netta rose and walked over to her mother's chair. She stepped behind it and dropped a loving arm over her mother's shoulders. "Sure, Dinny, it's a great time yez'll be havin' with Jimmy and Johnny."

"Hurrah, hurray; rah, rah, rah for the King of Happy House!" Jimmy caught Dinny about the waist and pranced across the floor with him. Dinny forgot to be bashful and raised his voice in as joyous a whoop as Jimmy. John did his best to add to the racket.

The noise woke Junior who had curled up on the davenport soon after dinner and gone to sleep. He sat up, blinked at the light and mumbled: "Hoo-ray; where are I?" Then he flopped over on one side and went back to sleep again.

The three older boys were in such high spirits that night they could not settle down. When they went up-stairs to bed Jimmy started a pil-

low fight which waged fiercely for five minutes. Dinny had occupied the boys' room while they were at the seashore. Now that they had returned he was still to have John's bed which he had used all summer. Jimmy and John would sleep together. They had decided that it would be "lots more fun" for Dinny to sleep in their room than for him to occupy one of the spare bedrooms.

The pillow fight came to a sudden, laughing stop when the end of a pillow which Jimmy had hurled at John, full force, split open and showered him with feathers. The light, fluffy things flew in all directions while the boys shouted with laughter. Their wild glee brought Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins to the door of the room to see what had happened.

"You boys may have the pleasure of picking up those feathers in the morning," Mrs. Hopkins told her flock. "Never mind them to-night. It's late enough for you to have lights out."

"Look at Junie," giggled John. "He's got feathers in his hair."

Mrs. Hopkins had put Junior to bed before the other boys had come up-stairs. He lay sweetly sleeping with half a dozen feathers caught in his curls. This time the noise did not

wake him. He had gone to the magic Land of Nod by the bedtime express.

"We can jump into bed in about half a second." Jimmy made a frisky leap into bed. He landed in the middle of the bed with a bounce. John sprang for the bed from the other side of it and alighted squarely upon Jimmy. They grabbed each other and rolled off the bed to the floor with a shriek and a giggle.

John rolled half-way under the bed while Jimmy sprawled on the rug and buried his face in a little pile of feathers. He laughed and got a mouthful of feathers as a result.

"Wh-h-ew!" He puffed, blew, then wiped his lips vigorously with a handkerchief. "I'm going to bed for sure this time. Don't you jump on me again, Mister John Roughneck Hopkins."

"That's your middle name instead of mine," laughed John as he emerged from under the bed. "That tussle woke me up. I'm not the least bit sleepy now."

"Neither am I," declared Jimmy.

"Out goes the light, just the same," decreed Mrs. Hopkins who had allowed her boys to have their fun. "Remember Dinny may be sleepy, even if you boys aren't."

"I'm not; not one little bit sleepy." Dinny shook his head vigorously. "I've had such a good time to-day I'm wide awake now just thinking about it."

"That's because we came home," was John's modest opinion. "Oh, I tell you we're some kids, Jimmy and I."

Mrs. Hopkins had switched off the light and left them. The room was so bright with moonlight, however, that the three could see one another plainly.

"I know that," Dinny returned very earnestly. "I can see why you call your house Happy House, too. It's about the happiest place in the world, I guess."

"You bet it is." Jimmy's head was on the pillow now. Dinny's remark about Happy House was the last he heard that night.

"Um-m-m," agreed John. "I think Happy House"—yawn, yawn, yawn—"is—Happy House is——" John said no more.

Dinny smiled to himself in the moonlight. "They're both asleep so quick," he breathed. "They ought to have the happiest house in the world," he reflected generously. "They're such good kids, and not stuck up, or mean the least tiny bit. That's the way I'm going to be when

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I have my new house. I'm going to have a daisy name for it. I'll call it ——” But Dinny went fast asleep trying to think of a fitting name for his new house of the future.

CHAPTER XIV

A BACK-PORCH PARTY

LUNCHEON at Happy House was hardly over the next afternoon when the Winners began to arrive. Dick appeared first to help Jimmy and John welcome the rest of the team. Presently the five other members came swinging buoyantly up the drive, shouting out their greetings. Nelson White was the only absent Winner.

The two groups of boys met half-way up the drive and a wild pow-wow was held.

"What's the matter with the Winners?" yelled Ned Blake, when the youngsters had shaken hands three times around.

"Noth-ing!" came as one voice from the reunited chums. "Noth, noth, noth-ing at all. That's what's the matter with the Winners!"

"Let's go around to the back porch." John waved a beckoning arm for the boys to follow. "It's fine and shady there this afternoon. Besides, Netta knows you're coming, and she might want to treat the crowd."

The five Winners had met Dinny on the day on which the Hopkins family had started for

Crescent Beach. As they had all been away from Lakeview on summer outings they had not seen the Irish boy again. They now shook hands with him as enthusiastically as they did with Jimmy and John. This pleased Dinny. He was anxious to play a game of ball on the Winners' team, but not unless he was sure that every boy on the team wanted him to take Nelson's place.

Around the house went the noisy little company, only too glad to be together again.

"Oh, see; Netta's treated already!" exclaimed Dick, pointing.

Netta had set a tall pitcher of lemonade and a fancy china basket of cocoanut macaroons on a small table at one end of the wide porch. The Winners piled onto a green rustic seat so far as there was room. The seat held four boys. Merritt Wade happened to be a fifth and the overflow. He sat down very suddenly on the porch floor while his chums howled their mirth at his spill.

"You can sit on this little seat with me, Merritt. I won't laugh at you. He, he; te, he; you looked awful funny when you sat down on the floor." Dick went on laughing in spite of his assurance that he wouldn't.

"I'll pour the lemonade, and you pass it, Ray-

mond." Jimmy grasped the handle of the big pitcher. "It's quite warm to-day so you fellows must be good and thirsty."

Dick helpfully started to pass the basket of macaroons. He tried to carry the fancy china basket so carefully he stumbled over one of Ned Blake's feet, made a desperate forward lunge and poured over half the macaroons into George Stearns' lap. This accident pleased Merritt as much as Merritt's spill had pleased Dick.

Though it was not long since the crowd of boys had finished their luncheon they soon drained the lemonade pitcher and finished the last macaroon. While they enjoyed Netta's treat they talked as fast as they could about the different places they had been and the different things they had done that summer.

"Nelson's not coming home for maybe two more weeks," said Ned Blake. Ned was Nelson's particular chum, just as Dick was John's and Jimmy's. "He wrote me a big, long letter. I got it last Friday. He saw an Indian that had shot a lot of grizzly bears. The Indian was old and grouchy. Nelson went up and asked him if he had any bears' claws to sell and the Indian said 'Ugh!' and wouldn't say another word. Nelson says he's seen lots of Indians out west,

but not any real wild ones, and three rattlesnakes, two cowboys, five geysers and a mountain lion."

"When Nelson comes home we'll make him tell us exactly how everything looks out west. Then we'll have a wild west show. Some of us can be Indians and some cowboys," proposed Charlie Newton eagerly.

"My mother has a bearskin rug in the living-room. One of us could wrap up in it and be a bear," was George Stearns' suggestion.

"We can get up a jim-dandy show." Dick's eyes sparkled. "What we've got to get up first is a couple of teams to play ball. Our team will be all right even if Nelson isn't home. Dinny's going to play. How about the A Boys' team? Are all those kids home?"

"Every one of 'em. I saw Frank Harding at the movies the other night and he said so." Charlie Newton gave out this pleasing news.

"We'll send Frank a challenge right away. I'll go into the library after while and write it." Frank Harding was the captain of the A Boys' team. As captain of the Winners' team it was Dick's pleasant duty to write the challenge.

"Practice to-morrow morning in the meadow. Be there by nine-thirty sharp," Jimmy called out in businesslike tones.

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The team received the announcement with loud approval. They were brimming with vacation energy and longed to expend some of it on their favorite game.

"We went over to the meadow to see the bungalow this morning," John said when the boys had stopped cheering Jimmy's announcement. "We walked all around the outside of it, but we couldn't see a thing inside. The doors were locked and there are shades in the windows, but they were pulled down tight and we couldn't get a peep of anything."

"The ground is all leveled off around the bungalow and new grass is coming up and there are stone walks in the back and front of it. Prob'ly you fellows have seen it?" Jimmy glanced inquiringly about him.

Raymond, Merritt and George had been the first of the Winners to come back to Lakeview. They had therefore been keeping an interested eye on the progress of the bungalow. Ned and Charlie had not been at home much longer than had Jimmy, John and Dick.

"None of us know how it looks inside, either," Raymond said. "The blinds were in the windows and the doors were locked when we came home. I guess Mr. Burton thought, after the in-

side was done, that maybe he'd like to keep the way it looked for a surprise."

"That's what we thought. John said ——"

"Now what was it John said?" suddenly boomed a voice. It came from the back doorway.

The four boys on the rustic seat leaned forward in a startled row and nearly upset the seat and themselves with it. A big man in a linen suit and a Panama hat was standing in the doorway laughing at them.

A shout of welcome went up from the porch party. Every boy sprang to his feet in a twinkling. The afternoon air rang with: "Mr. Burton, Mr. Bu-urton-n! Who's here? Why, Mr. Burton! What's the matter with Mr. Burton? He's all right!"

As Mr. Burton stepped out on the porch the boys delightedly surrounded him.

"Nothing the matter with you fellows that I can see," he roared genially above the noise. "You're as husky a lot of lads as I'd wish to see. Some vacations, eh, youngsters?"

"Yes, sir! You bet! Fine and dandy!" were among the replies blithely yelled back.

"Where did you come from, I'd like to know?" Jimmy took affectionate hold of the big man's arm and began towing him toward a

large wicker rocker which he and Dick had just vacated.

“Never mind where I came from. Oh, I heard that you fellows were going to have a party this afternoon! And you never sent me an invitation!” Mr. Burton pulled down his face and looked injured. He shook an accusing finger at the group of boys. “No lemonade left in the pitcher! Not a single cake, tart or cooky in the basket! Is this the way you treat your friends?”

CHAPTER XV

THE TENTH WINNER

"WE'RE going to have some more lemonade and cocoanut macaroons," John assured Mr. Burton so earnestly the big man's severe face suddenly broke into a broad smile.

"Ha, ha! You really thought I meant that," he laughed. "Well, I didn't. A very kind little bird happened to tell me that the Happy House folks were home. Then another little bird told me about the party."

"That second little bird was Daddy," guessed Jimmy. "I heard him talking on the 'phone to somebody this morning. But he never said it was you. Prob'ly you told him not to."

"Maybe I did. You and John taught me how to play Surprise, you know. I'm finding out that it's a great game. I play it now whenever I have a chance," joked Mr. Burton.

"I'm going to help Netta make the lemonade." Having promised offhand a fresh supply of lemonade and macaroons John thought he had better see Netta about it at once. He always

obligingly offered Netta his services when he wanted a second pitcher of lemonade.

"Lemonade and cocoanut macaroons sound sweet to me. Somebody please introduce me to the new Winner." Mr. Burton gave Dinny an interested, kindly glance.

"This is Dinny Ryan, Mr. Burton." Dinny had been hanging back at the edge of the jolly group. Dick now pulled him forward. "He's Netta's nephew. He's been visiting Netta at Happy House. He's a fine baseball player, and he's Irish." Dick added this last triumphantly. He had not forgotten that Mr. Burton had said his own mother came from Ireland and that he had a soft spot in his heart for the Irish.

"You don't say so?" Mr. Burton offered Dinny his hand.

"He's going to play ball on our team until Nelson comes home from Colorado," put in Charlie Newton.

"Nelson White; why, of course! I knew one of the Winners was missing from the crowd, but I hadn't yet sorted out his name. Nelson's a fine ball player, Dinny. You'll have to play pretty well to hold up his standard. You look as though you could play ball." Mr. Burton glanced approvingly at Dinny's slim, strong figure. He

liked the Irish boy's clear, honest blue eyes and square, determined chin.

"I—I've played catch a lot in the city where I live. I know how to play regular baseball, but there isn't any place to play it near where I live," Dinny regretfully explained.

"H'm-m; that's too bad. You'd better come to Lakeview to live and join the Winners," Mr. Burton said in his hearty way.

"I'd like to do that. I'd like to be a Winner, but I wouldn't expect to be anything but a sub player on the team," Dinny rejoined eagerly. "You see just enough fellows belong to the Winners to make the team. I'd think it was stacks of fun to practice and then take a fellow's place once in a while if he wasn't around to play a game."

"Why, you can belong to the Winners that way, right now," cried Dick. "You can be a Winner even if you do live far away. When you come to see Netta in summer time you can be a sub player. That's a good way to fix things. You're a Winner this minute." Dick leveled a finger at Dinny. "Isn't he, Mr. Burton? Isn't he, kids?" Dick turned to the others for approval.

"Ye-e-s!" was the boisterous chorus. Mr.

Burton roared "yes" as though he thoroughly enjoyed making a noise. The Winners were in the humor for making pleasant commotion. They pranced around Dinny and put him through a second gleeful handshaking which was considerably rougher than the first had been.

Dinny was standing in the center of the group, his tanned face glowing with embarrassed color, but full of laughter, when Netta and John appeared in the kitchen door to see what was happening on the porch.

"You said you were going to make the lemonade. Where is it?" Jimmy advanced upon John in playful threat.

"Be aisy," laughed Netta. Her comely face was full of pride of the jolly commotion over Dinny. "An' it's more liminade I made after yez come for the first pitcher. Don't I know yez by this time? Indade an' I do." She and Mr. Burton exchanged merry glances. She had conducted the big man from the front door to the kitchen when he had made his surprise appearance.

John had already disappeared into the kitchen for the lemonade pitcher. He now returned with it. The ice in the pitcher clinked invitingly against its sides as he set it down on the table

among the empty glasses. Netta followed him with a second liberal supply of macaroons.

Mr. Burton sat and laughed and talked with his young friends, crunched as many crisp macaroons as any of them and drank four glasses of lemonade. The boys were anxiously hoping he would say something about the new club house. Not a word did he say of it. Each boy was longing to start the subject, yet each hung back waiting for one of his companions to speak first. At last Jimmy could stand it no longer. He burst out with:

"John and Dinny and I went over to the club house before breakfast this morning. John and I were crazy to see how it looked. It's great."

"How do you like the looks of it inside?" asked Mr. Burton very soberly. His eyes were twinkling.

"Inside?" Jimmy stared at him. "Why, we couldn't see inside at all. There are shades in the windows and they're pulled down. The doors were locked tight, too. I guess you know all about it." He had caught the gleam of laughter in the big man's eyes. "I know you do." He began to smile.

"Maybe I do." Mr. Burton's hearty laugh followed his reply.

"Is it going to be a surprise?" Dick quizzed shrewdly.

"What do you think about it?" teased the smiling man.

"I think it is; a dandy one," nodded Dick.

The rest of the boys had been listening, their faces bright with expectation. They set up a united cry of approval at Dick's words.

"Yes, it's going to be a surprise," Mr. Burton said when the boys again simmered down. "While you fellows have been away on vacations having lots of fun I've been staying right at home planning my little surprise. It was all right for you to see the bungalow from the outside as it was being built, but I thought you'd like better not to see the inside of it until the very day on which we shall open the club house."

"I'd like it to be a red letter day for you, boys. I'm going to invite your fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters to come over to the meadow and see you take possession of your new house," he continued. "A certain young man is coming to Lakeview to ——"

"Mr. Robert West," piped up Dick, Jimmy and Ned Blake together. The rest of the boys took up the name and repeated it with enthusiasm.

Robert West was Mr. Burton's nephew and the firm ally and friend of the Winners. The youngsters had become acquainted with him the previous summer while he was visiting the Burtons.

"Guessed right again; smart boys. Yes, Robert will be here the last of the week. The last of next week I think we'll be ready to turn the bungalow over to the Winners for good." Mr. Burton spoke as though the idea pleased him immensely.

"And will the Winners really own the bungalow?" Raymond Alden asked wonderingly.

"Yes, my boy. I'm not going to answer any more questions about that part of it, though. You'll find out all that when the great day comes. I think it's time for me to go on. I might tell you too much if I stayed any longer." Mr. Burton rose from his chair and glanced at his watch. From his watch his eyes strayed to Dinny. "You must surely come to the opening, Dinny. You're a Winner now, you know," he said warmly.

"Yes, sir; I know. Thank you. I'll come," Dinny said happily.

"You bet you will," nodded Jimmy. "We'll tell your grandmother you're a Winner now and

have to stay to the opening of the club house. She'll have to say that's a good reason."

(Mr. Burton had stopped for a chat with Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins before Netta had brought him to the back porch to see the boys. He went through the house and out upon the front veranda to wish them good-afternoon accompanied by a loudly happy bodyguard of Winners. They saw him down the drive and out to his automobile. Then they gave him the heartiest, noisiest send-off to which they could lend their voices. They yelled their boyish appreciation until the big man's car disappeared into Sycamore Avenue.

They trooped back to the house and started a game of catch on the lawn. Dick went into the library to write the challenge to Frank Harding, captain of the A Boys. He wondered if Mr. Burton would invite the A Boys to the club house opening. He wished they would be invited.

It was after four o'clock when the boys went home. Dick lingered as usual to "hang around a little longer with you fellows." He kept a prudent eye on the time, however. "Not one minute after five o'clock, Dickie Stay-away-from-home," his mother had warned him very decidedly. He still had fifteen minutes longer to stay

and was sitting on the top step of the veranda with Jimmy. They had Jimmy's watch out and were timing John who was trying a speedy dash to the gate and back. Dinny had gone to the kitchen to have a happy talk with his Aunt Netta.

"Boys," Mrs. Hopkins called from the front doorway, "do you know where Junie is? I haven't seen him since I sent him up-stairs to take his nap early this afternoon. I supposed he was still sleeping. He was so tired last night from the trip. But he's not in the house. Please take a look about the gardens for him."

"We haven't seen him since lunch. We forgot all about him," Jimmy called back. "We'll go and hunt him now, Mother."

"I can help you hunt him a little bit, but you know what my mother said about five o'clock," Dick reminded. "You won't mind if I have to beat it all of a sudden, will you?"

"Of course not. We'll soon find Junie. You'd better not stop to help us. We don't want you to be late and have to stay home two or three days for not minding your mother."

Dick went with his chums as far as the end of Jimmy's garden. Then he said good-bye hastily and sped across the lawn and down the drive. Through the tall corn rows and in and out among

berry bushes the brothers went, calling: "Junie, Jun-i-e; Juni-o-r Hopkins, where are you?"

"He isn't down this way or he'd have answered us when we called," John presently declared.

"He must be out on the front lawn, or maybe clear down to the gate. He likes to hang around the gate. He was playing his accordion out there this morning. I hope he hasn't run away. He promised Daddy and Mother he wouldn't ever do that again." Jimmy gazed over the stretch of green bushes for some sign of missing Junior.

John had already accepted Jimmy's idea of where Junior was and started for the front yard. Jimmy followed him slowly, trying to look on all sides of him at once.

In the meantime Junior had been having some pleasant adventures of his own. He had awakened from a long nap while the boys were busy seeing Mr. Burton off. The minute he slid from his bed he had reached for his accordion which he had placed beside the bed before taking his nap.

The accordion had been restored to Junior only that morning. He had grabbed it with a glad little squeal when his mother had given it to him after breakfast. He had been in such a hurry to

try "Home Sweet Home" on Doodle he had forgotten to take his pet anything to eat. Doodle had mistaken the accordion for a new kind of feed box. He had paraded about Junior and poked his scarlet-combed head far forward at it. When only loud strange sounds had come from it instead of yellow corn he had hustled away from it with a displeased "cut, cut, cuh, huh!"

Junior had next played for Bollivar. He could not tell whether "Bulvider" had heard him or not. The rain barrel was covered and he was not allowed to climb up and pull aside the cover. He had come upon Taffy and Sunshine sunning themselves on the lawn. One or two loud chords from the accordion had sent them fleeing across the grass, their fluffy tails twice the usual size. Tip had also taken to his heels at first sound of it.

Finding the Happy House menagerie was not fond of music the little boy had gone down to the gate, seated himself on the drive with his back against a gate post and treated himself to a morning concert. It had ended very suddenly when his father had driven the roadster down the drive. Junior had begged for a ride on the front seat beside his father. Mr. Hopkins had said, "Yes, if you take the accordion to the house first."

After he had awakened from his nap Junior

had remembered someone of whom he had often thought while at the beach. He had just reached the front veranda with the accordion when he had happened to think of his friend Mr. Myers. Junior was anxious to see " nice, tall Mistur My-yars " and show him the accordion, and how well he could play it.

" I are goin' to take you to see Mistur My-yars right away," he told the accordion. " He will like to hear you better than Doodle does."

CHAPTER XVI

AN UNPLEASANT CALL

WHILE the Winners were playing catch on the Hopkins' lawn Junior was sitting contentedly on the steps of the Myers' back porch waiting for "Mistur My-yars" to come home. He had shoved the accordion under the boundary fence, rolled after it and marched about the Myers' large garden playing "Home Sweet Home" and keeping up a high, anxious call for his friend, partly to the tune of that long-suffering verse.

"Mistur My-yars" had not appeared so Junior had finally ventured as far as the steps of the Myers' back porch, hoping the banker might hear the music and come out to see him. Instead of Mr. Myers the cook and one of the maids had come to the screened back door. They had stood and smiled at him through the screen. Then the cook had come out on the porch and said: "Bless my heart, you're that little Hopkins boy, aren't you? Where did you get those pretty curls?"

"They came up on my head, same as plants come up in the garden. I are goin' to have 'em

mowed pretty soon. Daddy said I could. Where are Mistur My-yars? I came to see him. I can play the o-cordigan for him." Junior had proudly held up the accordion.

"Mr. Myers hasn't come home yet. He'll be here before long. You'd better sit down and wait for him. I'd like to hear you play another tune." The cook had pushed forward a chintz-cushioned rocker.

"I like to sit on the steps. Where is fat How-yard? I don't like to see him." Junior had plumped down on the top step and looked rather uneasily around.

"I don't know anybody else that likes to see him, either." The cook thought she had spoken too low for Junior to hear.

"That's what Dick said." Junior had heard.

"You're a wise kid. Don't worry. How-yard, as you call him, isn't here. He's off playing with the boys he runs with. Now play Katie and I a good tune and I'll give you something nice," the cook had promised.

Junior had braced the accordion on his knees and played with so much spirit he had bumped down one step with it as he rocked his small body to and fro in time to his music. He had been rewarded by a saucer of frozen banana custard

and the opinion of the maid that he was "some jazz band."

He was down to the last spoonful of custard when around a corner of the house lumbered Howard Myers. Junior hastily set the saucer on the porch floor, snatched up his accordion and slid down the steps in his hurry to get away. He was not afraid of Howard. He was afraid that Howard might steal the accordion. The fat boy had once stolen his hat, jacket and green umbrella. Junior did not trust him.

"Hi, you tow-headed little freshie. What are you doing around here?" yelled Howard as Junior scampered across the back yard.

The cook came out of the house when she heard Howard's voice. She spoke to him angrily. While he stopped to answer her rudely and make a face at her Junior kept on running. In his alarm he ran around the other back corner of the house and toward the front yard instead of through the garden toward Happy House.

Howard did not like Junior any better than he liked Jimmy and John. It was Junior who had come over to see Mr. Myers and found the playthings hidden in the Myers' garage which Howard and two of his chums had stolen from the Winners' cave on the previous Hallowe'en night.

"Oh, wait till I catch that little smarty! I'll give him a good scare." Howard ran clumsily around the house after Junior. When Junior saw him coming he gave a frightened shout and began running in a new direction. This time he headed for the garden. He had a long way to go, first across the lawn, then across the garden before he would reach the spot where he had rolled under the fence from the Hopkins' lot.

Junior could run fast for such a little boy. Howard was not a fast runner. He was much larger and took longer steps. He was soon only a few feet from Junior. Junior was over half-way across the garden when the fat boy caught up with him. Howard reached forward and caught Junior rather roughly by the shoulder. With the other hand he snatched at the accordion but did not succeed in jerking it from Junior's hands.

"Wee-e-e-e-e-e-e!" Junior sent up a long squeal that was not one of fright. His temper rose the instant he felt Howard's ungentle hand on his shoulder. Up went one sandaled foot. He kicked one of Howard's bulky legs with all his baby strength. He had not kicked anyone since he had kicked John on the day when the Hopkins boys had first come to Happy House

to live. He had promised Daddy then never to do so again.

"I'll teach you to kick me, you little ugly kid." Howard grabbed Junior by the other shoulder and began to shake him. Junior still clung to the accordion and shrieked at the top of his lungs.

Jimmy and John were at that moment outside the front gate peering up and down Preston Avenue for a possible sight of their small missing brother. They could not have heard Junior's cries from where they were. Someone else had heard them. Dinny's alert ears had heard them from the kitchen where he stood talking to Netta. He had not seen Jimmy and John since their mother had told them to hunt Junior. He did not know that Junior was missing.

"That's Junie hollering! Something bad's happened to him." Dinny ran out of the kitchen and across the back yard like a flash. He thought the screams came from the thick rows of berry bushes at the back of the lot. "Maybe a bumblebee stung him. That would hurt some." Dinny reached the rows of bushes and dashed in and out among them. Junior's shrill screams still sounded from ahead of him.

All of a sudden Dinny gave an angry shout.

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He made a running leap and cleared the low wire fence. "You big, fat bully!" he exclaimed furiously. He rushed upon Howard with all his angry force.

"Here, don't you hit me!" Howard loosed his grasp on Junior and tried to dodge Dinny. He was a second too late. Dinny caught him about the waist. The next thing Howard knew he was sprawling on his back in the dirt with Dinny sitting on his chest.

"You old coward! I'm not going to hit you but you do deserve some good whacks for what you did to Junie." Dinny wagged his head threateningly at Howard. "You've got to promise you'll never bother him again before I let you up."

"You don't know what he did to me," Howard declared resentfully. "He kicked me. I'll bet the skin is all off my leg where he kicked me. He's an awful kid. Anyway he has no business over here."

"You make me sick." Dinny's blue eyes flashed. "Why don't you take someone your own size to bully?"

"Who do you think you are?" sputtered Howard. "You're nothing but a fresh kid that works in Hopkins' garden. You let me up."

He began to flop from side to side in an awkward effort to shake Dinny off his chest.

Dinny was not to be shaken off. He set his two hands against the fat boy's cushioned shoulders and held him down harder than before. "Promise to let Junie alone then," he said doggedly.

"Aw, what do I care about that little monkey? I'll let him alone. You'd better take him home and tell those Hopkins babies to keep the Hopkins monkey where he belongs. They're both bigger babies than he is." Howard was beginning to lose his fear of Dinny. He had been afraid that Dinny would give him a pummeling. When he found that Dinny did not intend to strike him he grew braver.

"They're the best fellows I ever knew. Don't you say a single word against 'em. Get up now and beat it. I hate to look at you." Dinny sprang up from Howard's chest. He beckoned to Junior who had backed off in round-eyed dismay when Dinny had forced Howard to the ground. "Come on, Junie. We must go home."

"I guess you can't tell me to beat it when I'm on our own lot," cried Howard wrathfully. "You're the one who can just beat it; you and that kid."

"We're going to. We don't want to stay here a minute longer." Dinny pushed Junior gently ahead of him and swung on his heel. "You'd better let me carry the accordion, Junie," he said.

"No, no, Dinny. I are goin' to carry it myself. You wait a minute." He turned and called severely to Howard: "You are no good, fat boy. I are goin' to tell your father how mean you are. You are mean because you eat too much. Johnny said so. You are a cross old fatty."

"Aw, you keep quiet, you fresh little monkey." Howard glared angrily back at Junior over one shoulder. He had started for the house when Junior called disdainfully after him. He sulkily wished he was not so fat. What business had that Hopkins kid to say he ate too much? Howard felt a queer kind of shame steal over him. It hurt his pride to be called "fatty" by a baby. He was ashamed because Dinny had so easily downed him. He was even a tiny bit ashamed of the way he had treated Junior.

CHAPTER XVII

DADDY'S WAY

ON the way back to Happy House Dinny and Junior ran squarely into Jimmy and John. They had been in the kitchen and heard from Netta of Junior's screams and Dinny's sudden dash out the door. The brothers had run outdoors and toward the Myers' lot in time to meet Dinny and Junior coming through the Hopkins' rows of berry bushes.

"What was the matter with Junie?" quizzed John in excitement. "Where was he?"

"I went to see Mistur My-yars," Junior promptly answered for himself. "I had banana ice-cream on his back steps, but he don't come home."

"What made you yell so? Was it the banana ice-cream?" giggled John. "My, you have a loud voice! Netta could hear you clear from Myers' yard to the kitchen."

"I don't care." Junior wrinkled his small nose and grinned. "I are glad I yelled. Dinny heard me and came after me. The fat boy tried

to steal my o-cordigan. I kicked his fat leg. Then he shook me, but Dinny came quick and shook him and sat right on him."

"Oh-h-h!" whooped Jimmy. "Honestly, did you fight him, Dinny? What do you think of that, John? Where were we, I'd like to know, when all this happened?"

"You don't come for me at all." Junior looked reprovingly at his gleeful older brother.

"I think it's great." John was as delighted as Jimmy. "Gee, you must be strong or you couldn't have given fatty Howard a shaking, Dinny. Did he hit you? Did you hit him?"

"Nope." Dinny shook his head. "I didn't want to hit him. He was afraid to hit me. I've had fights with kids in the city and hit 'em hard. When you said the other day that your father said not to fight a fellow unless you had to stand up for your rights, or for somebody else's rights, I knew that was the best way to do. I'm never going to fight a fellow again just because he's no good and wants to fight me. But this fat Myers boy couldn't fight anybody much bigger than Junie. I'd be ashamed to hit such a coward."

Jimmy and John were so much excited over Dinny's tussle with the fat boy they forgot that

Junior had been lost for a while. Mrs. Hopkins had not forgotten. She was standing on the back porch when the three older boys crossed the back yard with the runaway. Just before that she had come into the kitchen and Netta had told her of hearing Junior crying and that Dinny had gone to find him.

"Junior Hopkins, where have you been?" she questioned in a displeased voice. "What did Mother say to you when she let you have the accordion to play with again?"

"I don't run away, Muvver." Junior's voice rose to an anxious squeak. "I just went to see Mistur My-yars." Junior poured forth his adventures in the same high key. He made the boys laugh when he laid the accordion on the grass and tried to show his mother the way Dinny had pounced upon Howard. Mrs. Hopkins kept a sober face.

"You are not to go to see Mr. Myers by yourself ever again," she told Junior.

"I have to see him," half wailed the little boy. "I like him as much as Doodle. I have to play the o-cordigan for him."

"He won't care to see you if he knows you have run away," his mother gravely replied. "You may go to see him some day soon, but

Jimmy and John are to take you to his house. You see how much trouble you had by going there all alone. If you do so again I shall put away your accordion and not allow you to have it for a whole year."

"Wh-hew-w-w!" Junior blew a loud dismayed breath. "I guess I are goin' to stay home."

"I guess you'd better," Jimmy laughingly advised.

"You were right in the way you treated that boy, Dinny," Mrs. Hopkins commended. "I thank you for standing up for Junie. I'm glad you did not strike the Myers boy, but he needed the punishment you gave him."

"I just happened to hear Junie yell. Jimmy or John would have done the same as I did if they'd heard Junie first," Dinny modestly declared. "They could have pulled him down as easy as I did. He can't fight for sour apples," the Irish boy added scornfully. "His father and mother ought to make him behave."

This was precisely what Mr. and Mrs. Myers were talking of over on their wide, beautiful veranda. The cook had indignantly told Mr. Myers of what had happened the moment he and his wife had returned from a drive. Mr. Myers had

hunted up Howard, ordered him to go to his room and to bed with a bread and milk supper. He had then gone out to the veranda where Mrs. Myers was sitting and said: "We will go over to see Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins to-night and apologize for the way Howard has treated Junior. Junior is my dear little friend and I am very angry with Howard for his roughness."

Mrs. Myers had never called upon Mrs. Hopkins. She was a proud, vain woman who thought herself far above the Lakeview residents socially. She did not even consider the Burtons fine enough to be her friends. She was not pleased with the idea of making a call on Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins, but she agreed that an apology should be made for Howard's bad behavior.

That evening after dinner while Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins were sitting on the front veranda they were surprised to see the banker's gray roadster stop outside the gate. They were still more surprised when Mr. and Mrs. Myers came through the gateway and on up the drive.

Junior was sitting in the porch swing beside his mother. When he saw his tall, gray-haired friend coming toward the house he slid from the swing with a jolly little shout and ran to meet him. "Oh, Mistur My-yars, I are glad to see

you!" was his delighted cry. "I don't see you for a long time!"

"I'm very glad to see you, Junior." Mr. Myers reached down and swung Junior to his shoulder. The little boy rode up the drive, laughing and calling to his father and mother from his high perch.

Mrs. Myers could not help smiling at Junior. He was so pretty and so full of fun and laughter. He eyed her rather shyly at first, but soon began to talk to her. Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins received the banker and his wife in such pleasant, friendly fashion that Mrs. Myers forgot to be haughty and really enjoyed the call.

It was Mr. Myers who made the apology for Howard's bad behavior to Junior. He did not say much except that he was sorry that Howard had behaved so badly and that he should not bully Junior again. Mr. Hopkins said even less about the trouble. He declared that the place for Junior was on his own home premises and asked the banker to think no more of the matter. He was sorry that he could not say to the banker: "Let Howard come over to Happy House and play with my boys." Howard had too clearly proved himself not a pleasant play-mate for any boy. Both Mr. and Mrs. Myers

knew this. They invited Jimmy and John to bring Junior over to see them, but they said not a word about Howard.

"I'm awful sorry for Mr. and Mrs. Myers," John said very solemnly after the banker and his wife had gone home. "They didn't like to say anything mean about Howard, because he's their boy, but they had to. I'm glad he isn't my brother."

"So am I. He'd have to be my brother, too, if he was. I guess we could never have called our house Happy House if he'd lived in it with us. You're a pretty good old brother." Jimmy caught affectionate hold of John and tried to roll him down the steps. The two engaged in one of their brotherly scuffles which always began and ended with laughter.

"Boys, come here a moment," Mr. Hopkins said presently as the pair paused on the lawn to rest. "I wish to tell you something about Howard Myers. I wish you to do your best for him in this way," he continued, as the brothers stood at the foot of the steps looking earnestly up at him. "Try to think of him always in a kindly way. If ever you find an opportunity to do him a kindness, don't fail to do it. He can't be your playmate as he is now, for he'd make nothing but

trouble for you. Some day he may have something happen to him that will be serious enough to change him from the disagreeable boy he is now to a fairly good boy. I hope, for his and his parents' sake, to see this happen. If it does, and you are still his schoolmates, then I wish you to be the first to help him along."

CHAPTER XVIII

NETTA'S SHIP COMES IN

THE mail the next morning brought Netta a letter at which she stared with unbelieving eyes. The letter had come from across the Atlantic Ocean and was postmarked "Ireland."

"An' who is it do yez tell me that's writin' to me from ould Ireland?" she asked Jimmy who brought her the letter. "Sure not even me mother gets mail from there anny more. It's no one we have over on the ould green isle but me great-uncle, an' he too mean to injoy good health. He'd saved up ten thousand dollars when last we heard of him and wasn't he livin' on bread and water? He was. Ten thousand dollars is a bit o' money in Ireland." Netta tore the envelope across and drew out the letter. She unfolded the single sheet of typed paper and looked curiously at it.

"Oh, me stars!" She suddenly threw up her arms, waving the letter above her head. Her amazed face broke into bright smiles.

"What is it, Netta?" Jimmy was all interest.

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"I know it's something nice or you wouldn't smile so."

"Nice; an' that it is. Ah, Jimmy, me ship's come in. An' wasn't Johnny sayin' that same ship must be caught in a sturm and sank to the bottom of the sea? He was. It's wrong he guessed. Sure I'm rich, Jimmy. Me Great-uncle Barney, he I just said was so mean, is dead. An' he left me five thousand dollars. It's his lawyer that says so in the letter. Oh, glory me." Netta joyfully fluttered the letter at Jimmy and ran out to the back porch where her mother sat rocking and knitting.

Jimmy made an equally rapid dash on the living-room where the sound of the piano told him that John was faithfully doing his hour of practice. "Netta's got five thousand dollars!" he yelled so loudly that John turned on the piano stool with a lurch that almost spilled him on the floor.

Jimmy rushed out of the room and on up-stairs to find his mother and tell her the wonderful news. John had not the least idea what Jimmy meant. He ran after him to find out, calling: "Wait a minute. What—where—how did Netta get five thousand dollars?"

He caught up with Jimmy at the door of the

sewing room. The pair burst in upon Mrs. Hopkins as she sat at the sewing machine hemstitching a table-cloth and excitedly told her about Netta's good fortune. Two minutes later all three were on their way down-stairs to rejoice with Netta over her good fortune. They found her sitting on the porch floor at her mother's feet, her eyes bright with happy tears. Her mother was holding the letter in one hand and wiping her eyes with the other. Mr. Hopkins, Dinny and Junior had gone to the Lakeview stores to do the marketing. They had yet to hear of Netta's great surprise.

Jimmy and John posted themselves at the gate to watch for the return of their father's car. They began signaling and waving frantically as soon as they saw the roadster turn into Preston Avenue.

"Trim your sails!" bellowed Mr. Hopkins, in imitation of Captain Andrew Turner, as he brought the car to a quick stop in front of the gate. "Glad to see the house is still here." He cast a funny, frightened glance toward Happy House.

"Yes, it's here, and so is Netta's ship." John made a gleeful prance about the front of the car. "Look out, Dinny, when we tell you something

we know. You'll be so glad you may fall right out of the car."

"I'll get out of the car before you tell me." Dinny opened the back door of the car and skipped nimbly to the ground.

"You go ahead and tell them, John," Jimmy said generously.

"No; you tell it," John insisted.

"We'll say it together. Ready now. Begin, 'Netta's great-uncle ——' You know the rest," Jimmy directed.

"Left her five thousand dollars," the pair shouted exactly together.

"Netta has a letter from Ireland. Her great-uncle Barney's lawyer wrote it to her. Her great-uncle's been dead for over a year, but the lawyer couldn't find out where Netta lived." John went on shouting this explanation.

"Yes, and he said in the letter he'd send her the money just as soon as he got a letter from her. Think of that!" added Jimmy at the top of his voice.

"Netta says she's going to buy a house in Lakeview just as soon as she gets the money," cried John.

"Hi; yip, yip, yow-w-ee-ee!" Dinny sent up a true Irish whoop. "Then we don't have to go

back to the old hot city any more. We're Lakeview folks. I can be a Winner all the time and play in the new club house." He grabbed Jimmy and whirled him around and around.

Netta's ship, with its timely golden cargo, kept everyone at Happy House pleasantly excited for the rest of the day and evening. Mr. Hopkins told Netta that he would take her, her mother and Dinny about Lakeview in the car the next day to look for a good piece of property. There were a number of new bungalows for sale in the town. He wished her to see these houses, but he thought if she could find a house, something like Happy House, only smaller, and with smaller grounds she would do better to buy such a property. It might take a little time, he said, to find the right house.

"It's me Uncle Barney's five thousand Irish dollars that'll pay for me house, an' me brother can come to Lakeview to work. Sure he an' me-self can be supportin' us an' Dinny can work in the summer time. I'll be workin' for yez just the same, Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins, only I'll be goin' home nights. Don't that sound great to me? It does." This was Netta's happy plan.

"I are comin' to see you, Netta, first thing, in your new house. I are goin' to bring my o-cordi-

gan, and maybe my red hat and my 'brelly." Junior cast a sidelong glance at his mother as he made this announcement.

"Sure an' it's a home sweet home we'll be havin' an' it's all day there yez can be playin' on your o-cordigan," Netta told him with a hug and kiss.

"We can go in the car, too, can't we, to help Netta find a house?" John asked anxiously.

"Yes, if there's room for you after all the Ryans are in," laughed Mr. Hopkins. "Remember this is Netta's inning."

"We're certainly going to have a lot of good times," Jimmy beamed on everybody. "There's our game with the A Boys, Nelson's coming home, and then he is going to have a party. Mr. Burton's going to give the Winners the bungalow, Netta's going to buy a house. I wish we could have a picnic at the lake, but we can't because you're going away so soon." He pointed a regretful finger at his father.

"But I'll be back again in a week for a few days at home. We can have one then. That's a little surprise I've been keeping for you."

This news set Jimmy and John to bubbling over with happy plans for a picnic. By the time their father returned from a short trip away Nel-

son would be home. They immediately decided to do their baseball practicing in the mornings so that they could go out in the car with the Ryan family afternoons. Mrs. Hopkins would drive the car on the hunt for a home for Netta and her family while Mr. Hopkins was away.

The brothers found the next week so full of exciting pleasures they were on the merry go from daylight until dark. Dick bobbed up at Happy House whenever he could coax his mother into allowing him to spend a while with the Hopkins boys. Dinny was so happy over the new home which Netta was to select in Lakeview he went about smiling all the time.

The ball game between the Winners and the A Boys took place one sunny afternoon in the meadow with plenty of Lakeview folks to see it. Dick and Frank Harding, the captains of the two teams, had asked Alfred Harding to be umpire. On the afternoon of the game who should walk into the meadow with Alfred but Mr. Robert West. Alfred asked Robert West to be umpire. Robert accepted the honor and the boys cheered him wildly as he took his place in the field.

Mr. and Mrs. Burton came to the game and brought with them several friends from Lake-

port. What surprised the Winners most was the appearance of Mr. Myers and Howard. Mr. Myers had heard of the game and had decided to take Howard to see it. He had made up his mind to interest himself in all Howard's amusements and see if he could not help his son to grow into a better boy. He thought it would do Howard good to see a game played between two groups of such boys as Jimmy and John Hopkins. Howard did not want to go to the game, but he dared not say so. His father had forbidden him to play with Fred Bates and Wallace Gray and had warned him against going anywhere beyond their own premises without his permission.

Howard made up his mind that he would go and see Fred and Wally the first time his father went away from Lakeview. His father often made short business trips to the large cities. He pretended to be very meek so as to make his father think he was really trying to behave well. He thought that if he did nothing wrong for a while his father would then not watch him so closely.

Mr. Hopkins came home from his week's trip away just in time to see the last two innings of the ball game. He reached Happy House and

found no one at home except Netta's mother. Even Netta had gone to the game with Mrs. Hopkins and Dinny. Netta's mother liked much better to sit on the shady porch and rock and knit than to go to a ball game.

John spied his father coming across the meadow. He passed the good news to the other boys. The Winners were so greatly elated at Mr. Hopkins' arrival they worked harder than ever to beat the A Boys. The score had been tied at the fifth inning and was still tied when Mr. Hopkins had appeared at the last of the seventh inning. When Robert West finally called "Game" after a hot contest, which had been well worth the cheers and applause of the fans, the Winners had won by two points. Dinny had shown himself to be as good a player as any of the other boys on the team.

After the game was over Mr. and Mrs. Burton invited both teams to a jollification at their home in honor of Robert West. Mr. Burton had secured permission to borrow the boys beforehand from their fathers and mothers. All the "lucky kids" had to do was to go to the party and enjoy themselves. At the merry-making the youngsters received another surprise. They had just gathered in the dining-room when a door at one

side of the room opened and Nelson White bounced into the room with a ringing Indian war whoop. He was dressed in a complete buckskin Indian costume with a huge feathered head-dress. On his feet were deerskin moccasins and around his neck was a necklace of bears' claws.

Nelson and his mother had come home from the west that afternoon. They had happened to be on the same train with Mr. Hopkins. He and Nelson had had a fine time together all the way to Lakeview. Mr. Hopkins had not known of the ball game that day until Netta's mother had told him of it. Soon after he reached the meadow he heard from Mr. Burton about the party to be given for Robert West after the game. Nelson had told him about his Indian costume while on the train. Mr. Hopkins thought it would be fun for Nelson to appear in the Indian costume at Mr. Burton's house and treat his chums and the A Boys to a surprise. He hurried to the nearest telephone as soon as the game was over and called up Nelson's house. Nelson himself answered the telephone.

Nelson was so proud of the Indian costume he had packed it in a suitcase so he could have it handy to show the boys the moment he reached home. He had explained this to Mr. Hopkins

and showed him the costume during the ride to Lakeview. All he had to do was to ask and receive his mother's permission, snatch up the suitcase and hurry to Mr. Burton's home before the other boys reached there. Mr. Hopkins had already let Mr. and Mrs. Burton into the secret. Nelson had only time enough to get into the costume and dive into the side room when the boys arrived.

Now that Nelson had returned to Lakeview and Mr. Hopkins was to be at home for a week the boys' plans for the picnic at Rainbow Lake went forward with a rush. Jimmy and John were in doubt as to whether or not they should invite the A Boys to the picnic.

"I'd rather you wouldn't this time," their father decided for them. "This is a water party, you know. Ten boys are as many as I care to look after at a time. Why not make it a Winners' reunion? When we have our next nutting party we'll invite the A Boys to it."

Besides Mrs. Hopkins, Netta and Junior, Mrs. Ryan and Dinny were the only other persons invited to the Winners' picnic. Mr. Hopkins hired a truck on which to carry the dressing tent and the luncheon hampers the same as he had done the summer before at the first picnic.

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Mrs. Hopkins and Netta prepared the luncheon and packed it in the hampers. They packed one hamper of food which the boys were to cook over a campfire for their supper.

The morning of the picnic was perfect with blue skies and golden sunlight. The Winners tore about the Hopkins' back yard in the highest spirits as they waited for Mr. Hopkins to give the word so they could scramble into the truck and be off to the lake. This time none of the boys were going to ride in the roadster. Mrs. Hopkins was to drive it. Both Jimmy and John wanted to ride on the truck with "Daddy and the fellows."

Over in the Myers' back yard Howard heard the commotion going on at Happy House. He stole down to the wire boundary fence to see what was happening. When he saw the truck standing on the side drive and watched the tent and the hampers being loaded upon it he guessed the meaning of the jolly hubbub. The sight of the crowd of boys having such a good time made him feel sulkily lonesome. He thought he would like to go down to the lake with Fred and Wally. He wondered if he dared to go. His father had been away from Lakeview for two days. He might not be home until the close of the week.

His mother was going to a tennis match at the Country Club that afternoon. Howard thought the chance to slip away from home for a little while was too good to be missed.

CHAPTER XIX

DISOBEDIENCE

THE truckload of happy boys presently rolled down the drive and out of sight. Howard watched the truck until it disappeared from his view with its laughing, shouting freight of youngsters. He turned away from the fence and walked slowly through the garden trying to think of some way to gain his mother's consent to leave the house for a while. He was anxious to see Fred and Wally. There was no telephone in the home of either. He would have to go to their houses for them.

He finally resolved to ask his mother if he might go to the library and exchange a book he had been reading. Since his father had been keeping him strictly at home Howard had pretended to be interested in books. He had succeeded in persuading his father to allow him to go to the library once a week for a book. By this means he had been able to go through the town and occasionally see Fred and Wally.

His mother had never been as strict with How-

ard as was his father. When Howard came into the living-room where she chanced to be and asked her if he might please go to the library she said "yes" and thought no more about it.

Howard waited until Dan, the Myers' man, had driven away with his mother in her limousine. He still had all of his month's allowance of five dollars. He had had no chance to spend any of it. He stuffed the five crisp one-dollar notes into a trousers' pocket, took the library book and hustled out of the house. He hoped he might happen to meet Fred or Wally in the street. He intended to go to the library and exchange the book so that he could prove that he had been there if his mother should ask any questions about the matter that evening.

It was a little after two o'clock in the afternoon when he reached the library. He exchanged the book and went on to the drug store to treat himself to ice-cream. In front of the drug store he met Fred and Wally together. Howard greeted them with: "You're just the fellows I want to see." He invited them into the drug store to have ice-cream and while they ate it he told them about the picnic.

"Let's go down to the springboard and see if that gang is there," he proposed. "I'd like 'em

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to see that we can go where they can and they can't stop us. I'd like to go in bathing, but I haven't any bathing suit with me."

"I can fix that," declared Fred. "You fellows go on down to the lake and I'll skin home and get us some bathing suits. I have two of my own and my brother's bathing suit will fit you. He's a fatty, same as you."

"Cut out calling me a fatty," Howard said sharply. "There are lots of fellows a good deal fatter than I am."

"Oh, I was only teasing you." Fred did not care to make Howard angry. He was eager to go down to the lake for a good time. "Don't get mad. You and Wally can meet me in front of old Reilly's stand." Fred turned and raced up the street.

When Wally and Howard arrived at the springboard they saw no signs of the picnic party. Mr. Hopkins' flock had gone into the lake for a swim before ten o'clock that morning. They had frolicked in the warm water until noon. After their swim they had eaten lunch under the same big trees where they had spread their picnic lunch the summer before. After lunch they had left the truck, which had been reloaded with the tent and all but one hamper, in the care of the

man at the small gasoline station near the lake. They had taken the hamper with them to a spot farther up and around a bend of the shore. There they were going to spend the afternoon and cook their supper.

"Where do you suppose those kids went?" Howard asked, his fat face full of disappointment. "I thought sure they'd be here."

"Huh; maybe they didn't come here at all. But we don't care. We can go in swimming, anyhow."

Howard scowled. He had hoped to show "those kids a few things" he knew about swimming. He had gone in bathing almost every day that summer while at the seashore and now considered himself an expert swimmer. He cared far more about showing off in the water before the boys he disliked than he cared about the pleasure of swimming.

"Let's walk along the shore. Maybe we'll see them. I saw the tent on the truck that they had to dress in last year. They were certainly going swimming," Howard said crossly.

"They went swimming in the morning last time," Wally reminded. "It's afternoon now. Hark!" He raised one hand. "I hear somebody yelling off up there. I'll bet it's that gang."

Howard heard the sounds, too. He started up the shore toward them.

"Hey; aren't you going to wait for Fred?" cried Wally.

"Oh, come along. I'm only going up to the bend. I think those kids are there, only we can't see 'em from here. We'll find out if they are. Then we'll come right back."

Wally followed Howard, but kept looking back for a sight of Fred. Surely enough, when they reached the curve in the shore they saw the Winners. They were seated in a circle on the sand listening to a story Mr. Hopkins was telling them. They had just finished a noisy romp and were now resting.

"Get back or they'll see you." Howard caught Wally by the arm. "Come on. I know what I'm going to do. We'll put on our bathing suits and walk along till we are pretty nearly to the curve. Then we'll swim right around that curve and up in front of those kids, just as if we hadn't seen them at all."

"Gee, the water's deep around that curve." Wally eyed the still, dark water doubtfully.

"Well, you can swim, can't you?" was Howard's scornful question.

"Yep. There's Fred." Wally started toward

his chum at a brisk run. Howard followed him.

The three boys went into Mr. Reilly's little store and changed the clothing they wore for bathing tights. Mr. Reilly charged them twenty-five cents apiece for the privilege. This charge Howard had to pay. Fred and Wally had no money. Fred was not pleased with Howard's plan. He wished to stay near the springboard. Howard squabbled with him a little and Fred gave in to him. The three trotted along the shore until they reached the place near the curve where Howard intended to go into the water. There the water was fully fifteen feet deep. Directly at the curve the water was twenty feet deep.

Mr. Hopkins was in the midst of a stirring Indian tale when Dick gave a surprised "Oh-h!" and pointed a finger at the lake.

"Never mind, boys," Mr. Hopkins said in a low tone. "Pay no attention to those fellows." He went on with the story.

A half giggling murmur went the round of the circle when the Winners settled down again. They could not help looking now and then at the three boys in the water who were talking and laughing loudly to one another. Howard boldly swam to shore, came out of the water and strutted

along the sandy edge, then took to the lake again with a great deal of splashing and noise. As there was no high place to dive from he thought he would at least show the Winners that he was not afraid of deep water.

"You can't get the water too deep for me," he boasted as he swam out with what he considered a difficult stroke. "I can swim in water twice as deep as this. Let's play tag." He struck at Fred as the other boy swam near him. Fred was farther away than Howard had thought. His falling arm struck the water so violently it jarred his heavy body. He felt a sudden sharp pain seize him. He screamed and threw up both arms. Next instant he sank beneath the dark surface of the lake.

Mr. Hopkins had nearly reached the end of the story he was telling the boys when Howard and his companions appeared. While he had told the boys with him to pay no attention to the uninvited three he had kept an eye on them as he talked. He intended when he finished the story to go down to the water's edge and order the swimmers to come ashore. They were boys no older than his own sons. It was his duty to safeguard them. He thought the water at the curve

looked as though it might have a strong under-current.

He brought the story to a quick end and sprang to his feet. "Stay where you are, boys," he said to the Winners. "I am ——" Just then Howard screamed. Before the fat boy disappeared beneath the lake's surface Mr. Hopkins had kicked off his low shoes and dived into the water. He came up almost at the point where Howard had gone down. The instant Howard had screamed Wally and Fred had started to swim to shore, yelling frantically. They were both too cowardly to be of any help.

As he came to the surface he caught a glimpse of Howard's body floating within a couple of feet of him. He grabbed for it and grasped the fat boy by one arm. Howard was too weak from the severe cramp which had seized him to clutch him and thus make it harder to take him to shore. Fortunately the shore was near. Howard was not easy to tow to land on account of his weight. Mr. Hopkins was not only strong; he was thoroughly at home in the water. He reached the shore where Dinny, Nelson, Dick and Jimmy were waiting to haul Howard out of the water amidst a chorus of yells that might have been heard a mile away.

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Mrs. Hopkins and Netta were standing ready to give first aid to the half-drowned boy. The two women and Mr. Hopkins soon had him breathing regularly and with his eyes open. He had not been unconscious long when Mr. Hopkins rescued him.

"We'll take him down to Mr. Reilly's store and put him to bed," directed Mr. Hopkins. "He ought to be between blankets for a while. Dinny, Jimmy, Nelson and I will carry him. We're the strong men in this crowd. I hope Mr. Reilly can lend me some dry clothes."

The four lifted Howard and started with him for Mr. Reilly's stand. Mr. Hopkins dripped water every step of the way. The rest of the picnickers followed them. Dick and John carried the hamper between them. Howard had managed to put an end to the picnic in a way he had not expected to do. It was not yet four o'clock in the afternoon, but the pleasure of cooking their supper out of doors had been spoiled for the boys by the accident.

Mr. Reilly had nothing but his cot in the back room of the stand on which to place Howard. He was such a little man his clothing would not fit Mr. Hopkins. Mrs. Hopkins said she would drive to Happy House with Netta, her mother

and Junior. Jimmy could go with them and drive the car back to the stand with the dry clothing for his father. If Howard was then strong enough Mr. Hopkins said he would take him home in the car and let Jimmy drive the truck for once. Jimmy was delighted at the work cut out for him.

"Cheer up, boys," Mrs. Hopkins said to the solemn group of lads clustered about the open door of Mr. Reilly's little back room. "You are to stop at Happy House for a jollification. That will be nicer than breaking up the picnic now, won't it?"

"Yes, ma'am," the youngsters answered in one voice. They brightened at the invitation. It meant a happy ending to the picnic after all.

Mrs. Hopkins sent Jimmy back to the lake from Happy House as soon as she reached home. Besides the dry clothing for Mr. Hopkins she added a suit of her husband's pajamas and one of his bathrobes for Howard. By the time Jimmy returned to Mr. Reilly's little store Howard was able to talk a little. He was very weak, however, and complained of a pain in his chest. Mr. Hopkins decided the best thing to do was to bundle him into the car and take him home.

"I'd have been drowned if it hadn't been for

you," he said in a weak voice to Mr. Hopkins who was helping him into the pajamas and the bathrobe. "I think you are just splendid." He gave Mr. Hopkins a look so full of gratitude and boyish worship that the man could not but believe that the "something" which he had told his own boys might some day happen to change Howard had really happened.

CHAPTER XX

THE NICEST PLACE IN THE WORLD

"HURRY up, John. The fellows are at the gate," Jimmy stopped only long enough to call out to John then whizzed down the drive to meet his chums.

John had gone into the library for a poem which he had left there the night before. He had composed the poem in honor of Mr. Burton and was going to read it at the opening of the club house. Mr. Burton knew nothing about the poem. It was to be a surprise for him. The longed-for day had come at last. The Winners were to meet Mr. and Mrs. Burton and Robert West in the meadow at three o'clock that afternoon when Mr. Burton was to give the boys the keys to the bungalow and the right to call the pretty little club house their own.

Their families and the A Boys had also been invited by the big man to be present at the opening and inspect the Winners' new treasure. It was still only a little after two o'clock but the boys had been too impatient to wait any longer at home. They were anxious to go over to the

meadow and help welcome their families when they arrived. Besides the poem John was to read Dick was to make Mr. Burton a "thank you" speech. Mr. Burton had asked the Winners to choose a name for the club house. After some hard thinking and a great deal of talk about it Dick had suggested a name that pleased them all. They were saving this name as another surprise for Mr. Burton.

Jimmy and John had had a busy week while their father was at home again. They had gone in the car almost every afternoon with Netta and her mother to help find the Irish girl a home. She had finally selected a comfortable little house with a large yard and plenty of ground for a garden. It was not more than a quarter of a mile from Happy House. Netta's brother was going to see to the moving of his mother's goods to Lakeview. Dinny and Mrs. Ryan did not need to go back to the city again.

During that busy week Nelson had given a party to the Winners and the A Boys. The Hopkins boys and their father had also gone to Mr. Myers' house to see Howard. Howard was still in bed, weak from the severe cramp with which he had been seized while in bathing, and ill with a cold. Mr. Myers had been more shocked

than angry when he returned home and learned what had happened to Howard. This time it was Howard himself who told his father of his disobedience and his narrow escape from drowning. Howard had felt terribly frightened over it. He had had plenty of time to think about himself and he resolved to try to be a better boy. Mr. Hopkins had become his hero. He was very anxious to please him and to know him better.

Howard's own father was quick to see the change in his son. He treated Howard with such gentle kindness while he was ill that Howard began to believe that his father was the finest man in the world.

Jimmy and John were not sure of what they ought to say to Howard when they went to see him. They could hardly believe that he would be even polite to them. Mr. Hopkins had more faith in the subdued fat boy. He believed that Howard had received a lesson he would never forget. To their surprise Howard seemed very glad to see them. Mr. Hopkins said funny cheerful things to the sick boy that made him laugh. Mr. Myers laughed with Howard. He was pleased because the Hopkins boys had come to see Howard. Before they went home Jimmy and John invited Howard to come to Happy House

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when he was well again. This pleased his father even more.

Now the great day of the opening of the new club house was here. The Winners, dressed in their best suits and hats, their young faces radiant, stood grouped about the gate waiting for Jimmy and John. John soon came running down the walk behind Jimmy and the company started for the meadow. Dinny had joined the other boys at the gate a little ahead of the brothers.

"We're the first ones here, but that's what we wanted to be," Dick said as the buoyant procession of boys crossed the meadow and came to a stop in front of the pretty bungalow. Finished, it looked precisely like the water color drawing which Mr. Burton had showed them on the spring day when they had met him in the meadow and he had told them of the club house he intended to build for them.

"Our cave was fun, but this beats it about a million times," cried Merritt Wade. "Hurray! We'll soon know all about our club house."

"I'm crazy to see how it looks inside!" exclaimed Raymond.

"So am I!" went up from each boy.

The Winners stood talking happily together until the guests began to arrive and they were

kept occupied welcoming them. The A Boys came in a body with Alfred Harding and Robert West leading them. Last of all Mr. and Mrs. Burton came strolling across the meadow. With them were Mr. and Mrs. Myers. This so surprised the Winners they almost forgot to start the yell they had made up in honor of the Burtons. They managed to give it after a few amazed gasps. Jimmy was so pleased to see Mr. and Mrs. Myers he started a second yell in which the boys joined heartily.

Mr. Hopkins had told Mr. and Mrs. Burton of the accident to Howard and of how greatly it had changed him. They had been much interested in the matter and had felt that they, too, ought to do their part toward helping him along in his new resolve to be good. They had therefore sent an invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Myers and Howard to be present at the opening of the bungalow. Howard was still not able to be out of bed but his father and mother had been pleased to accept the invitation.

"Now, boys, I haven't very much to say to you about your new club house except that it has been a great pleasure for me to build it for you and I hope you'll be happy playing in it. I never could make speeches so I'm not going to try to

make one now," Mr. Burton said in his hearty voice as the sounds of the boys' greeting died down.

The Winners were drawn up in a little group in front of the bungalow. The A Boys stood right behind them with Alfred Harding and Robert West. The families of the Winners had also formed into a larger group at left of where the Winners were standing.

"I think a great deal of each one of you boys," Mr. Burton continued, "but I'm going to present the keys of the bungalow to the boy I believe to be the finest type of manly boy I have ever known. I know the rest of you boys will understand what I mean. I'm sure you think of him in the same way. Jimmy, come here and take these keys."

Mr. Burton extended a little silver key ring, on which dangled four keys, to Jimmy Hopkins. Jimmy came obediently forward with a slightly dazed expression on his fair face. His chums set up such a hubbub no one could have heard him if he had tried to speak. He said nothing, however. He had truly received a surprise.

When gradually it grew quiet again Dick stepped forward and began his "thank you" speech. Dick thought he ought to make the

speech the first thing to let Mr. Burton understand that the Winners appreciated the great gift. He knew Jimmy would say something when he had got over his surprise.

When Dick had made his speech and been loudly applauded Jimmy stepped forward and said: "Mr. Burton, John has a poem he made up on purpose for you. I'd like him to read it first, then I'd like to say something to you and Mrs. Burton and all our friends and folks who are over here now. I thank you a whole lot for the fine way you spoke about me." Jimmy's face was flushed with modest confusion.

"You're very welcome, my boy. Well, John, I'm honored to think you have composed a poem about me. I'm very anxious to hear it."

"We all are," came from Mrs. Burton in her bright, encouraging way. "Do please read it to us at once, John."

John unrolled the paper he had held in his right hand, looked a little self-conscious and read:

"We're glad that we are Winners and we are very
certain

There is not anyone we know more kind than Mr.
Burton.

Because he is a friend to us and we all like him so,
We're going to name our club house the Burton
Bungalow."

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There were several more verses to the poem. John was interrupted by applause after every verse. Mr. Burton stood beside his wife looking almost as amazed and embarrassed as Jimmy had.

When John finished the poem and made a dignified bow to the smiling company, Jimmy was ready with his speech. It had not taken him long to think about what he wished to say. The speech was like himself, frank and sincere.

"Mr. and Mrs. Burton and all our friends," he began with an earnest nod to those listening. "The Winners are so glad to have a club house they can hardly wait till I take the keys and open the door. We don't know how it looks inside, so our families will all have a chance to see it as soon as we shall. We want you to come in as soon as I open the doors and go all around it and have a pleasant time. We can't begin to thank Mr. Burton for giving us Burton Bungalow. All we can do is to be good enough all the time to deserve it."

Surrounded by friends Jimmy proudly fitted the key to the lock of the bungalow's front door. It turned easily and he swung open the door. Mr. Burton insisted that the Winners should be the first to enter the new club house. One by one they stepped across the threshold. Then such an

outcry as they raised. The long beam-ceilinged room they stood in echoed with their ringing shouts.

Burton Bungalow inside was very much like one of the beautiful houses, called camps, which are to be found in the Adirondack Mountains. The living-room took up nearly all the floor space of the bungalow. It had a wonderful polished floor dotted with skin rugs. There were deer antlers on the walls and other hunting trophies calculated to interest and please the boys. The room was a combination living-room and library. There was a large cabinet filled with curios from all parts of the world, and built-in shelves lined with books. In the middle of the room was a very large library table with comfortable chairs around it. There was room enough at the table for all the Winners.

The room was so different from anything the boys had imagined they could not readily get over their amazement. It was like a story-book room. This was as Mr. Burton intended it should be. He was a great hunter and had collected hunting trophies for years. The crowning glory of the room was a huge tiger skin. He had shot the tiger in India. There was a kitchen and a small lavatory back of the living-room, but the boys

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were too much taken up with their wonderful "council room," as John immediately named the big room, to inspect the rest of the bungalow.

The guests came trooping in at the Winners' heels to see the wonderful room. Among them were Celia, Ephie and Jabez. They had been especially invited by Mrs. Burton to share the Winners' pleasure.

"I'm glad we didn't see this dandy room until now," John said to Dick and Jimmy as the three chums stood admiring the gorgeous yellow and black tiger skin with all their boy hearts.

"So am I," agreed Dick. "My, I never thought our council room would look like this, did you?"

"No; I thought it would be more like the living-room in a house with fancy chairs and a davenport and pictures. This is what I call an exciting room. Everything you look at makes you think of a story." Jimmy drew a long, admiring breath as his eyes traveled about the big room with its wealth of interest. "I'm so glad we came to live in Lakeview. If we hadn't come to Lakeview to live we wouldn't have ever known you, Dick, and we would never have come to play in this meadow."

"And we wouldn't have dug the cave, and Mr.

Burton wouldn't have fallen down on it," cut in John. "Nothing would have happened to us in the city like the nice things that have happened to us here. I think Lakeview is the nicest place in the whole world."

"That's just what it is. The nicest place in the world," Dick loyally repeated.

THE END

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